May 1996 • $5.00

kidscreen

About reaching children through entertainment software

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E3

Special Report

Film and TV characters find new lives in CD-ROMs

Cardiff Festival

Animation on stage

L.A. Screenings

Annual event has become an international TV market

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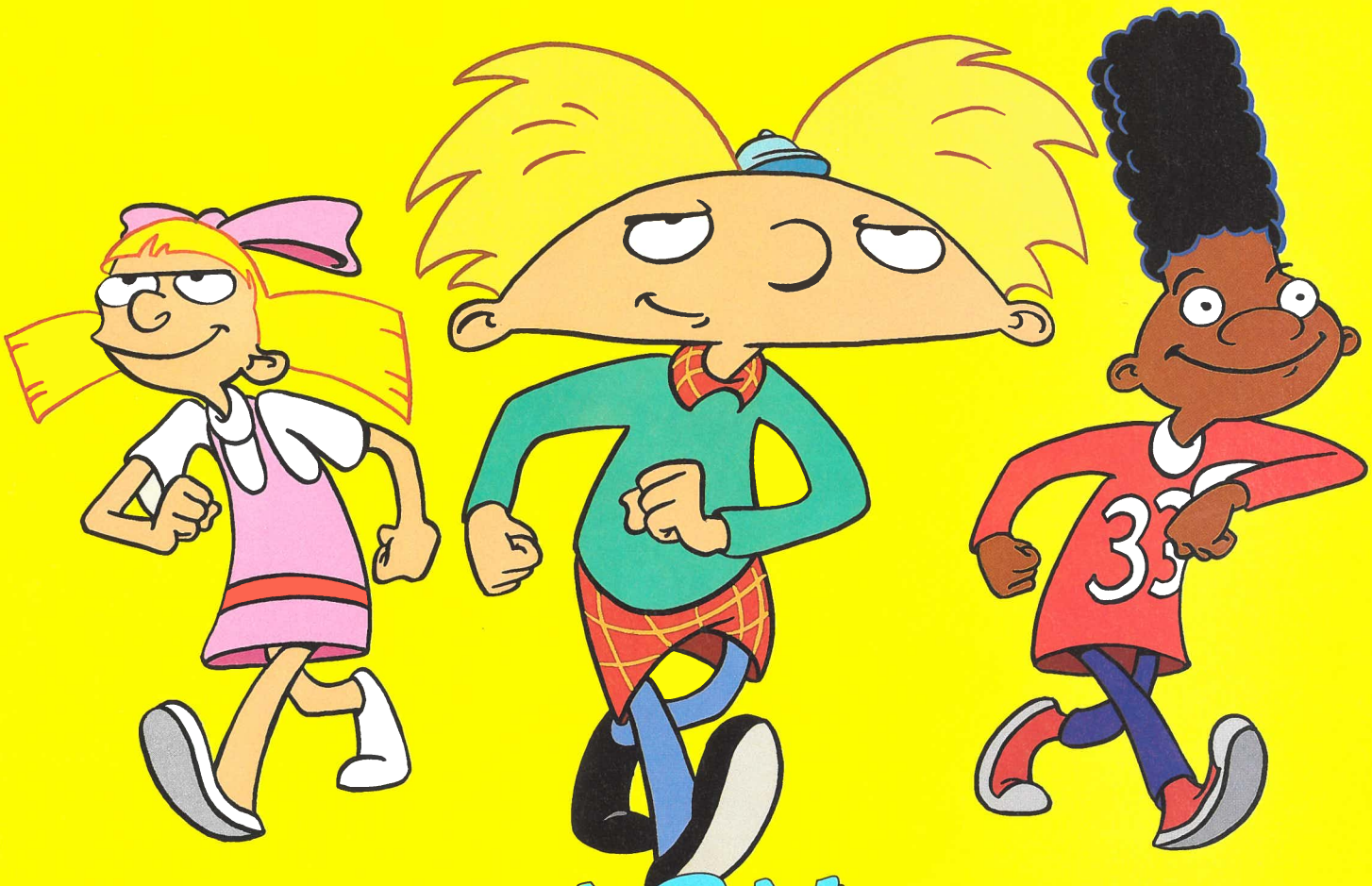

...And the Eyes & Ears

What's new at Nickelodeon? Just what kids want! The company that introduced *Rugrats* and *The Ren & Stimpy Show* brings you 2 new breakthrough series, *Hey Arnold!* and *The Angry Beavers.*

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of Millions of Kids!

They've got all the parts and pieces that make Nickelodeon unbeatable!
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Kemi and **Zemi** of **Nickelodeon**'s popular *Roundhouse* series are featured in a new video promoting proper hygiene from **KidSafety of America**. It marks the publisher's first foray into the consumer market. Page 16

British broadcaster **GMTV** has bought up the popular Australian series ***Bananas in Pyjamas*** and is launching the show in a blaze of publicity, hoping to duplicate the show's success in Australia and North America. Page 18

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A look at **L.A. Screenings**, the annual event created by Hollywood studios to show off their fall television seasons, which now draws an international crowd. Page 20

SPECIAL REPORT

The **Electronic Entertainment Expo**, only in its second year, has become a must-attend event for developers, publishers, distributors and retailers involved in interactive entertainment. In our special report, we examine the cross-over of (mostly animated) film- and television-originated characters to CD-ROMs and on-line services. Coverage begins on Page 23

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Big Blue Dot's work is omnipresent in the kids market. The company has helped design logos for **Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network, Hanna-Barbera** and **YTV**. And there's more. Page 41

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Yahooligans! is a new Web site that deserves a visit. Web site reviewer Greg Skinner gives the site a whopping 9.5 out of 10. Page 44

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on the cover

Our cover features the starring characters of the popular *Animaniacs* television series, who are playing a new role in the world of CD-ROM. Van Nuys, California-based Jasmine Multimedia Publishing created the CD-ROM under license from the show's partners, Warner Bros. and Amblin Entertainment.

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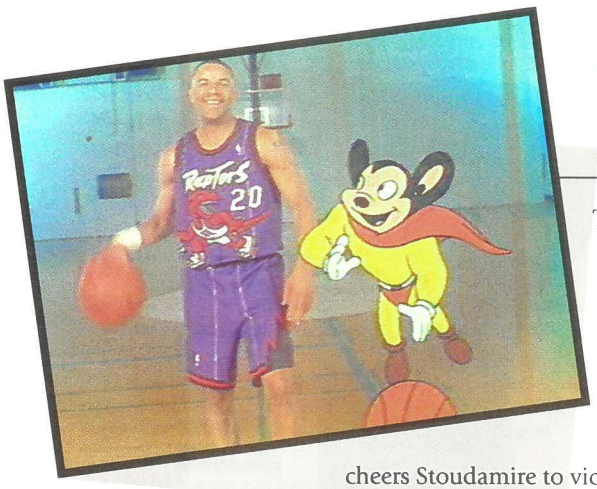


Mighty Mouse flies for Nike

The association between cartoon superhero Mighty Mouse and Damon Stoudamire, the diminutive star of the NBA's Toronto Raptors, forms the storyline of a new 30-second television commercial promoting Nike sportswear.

Mighty Mouse, who appears as a tattoo on Stoudamire's right forearm, comes to life in the commercial when the tattoo becomes animated and flies off Stoudamire's arm and then interacts with live footage of the Raptors' guard on the basketball court.

Mighty Mouse goes zipping between the legs of teammates and opponents and cheers Stoudamire to victory. The spot includes a group of animated mice congratulating Stoudamire with high fives.

The commercial was produced by Duck Soup Produckions of Los Angeles. The ad agency is Wieden and Kennedy of Portland, Oregon.

A three-year toy pact

The giants of the toy and entertainment industries, Mattel and Walt Disney, are said to have signed an exclusive three-year deal for Disney's film and television properties.

Mattel and Disney have combined on major licensed toy successes in recent years, including such box-office and related toy hits as *The Lion King*, *Pocahontas* and *Aladdin*.

The agreement, which is said to begin in 1997 with the release of Disney's much-anticipated animated feature film *Hercules*, comes at a time when Disney has also entered talks of an exclusive arrangement with global fast food chain McDonald's Restaurants (see page 6).

Hasbro in review

The U.S.'s leading toy makers appear to be looking to refresh their advertising.

Earlier this year, Tyco Toys consolidated all of its advertising business, estimated at $75 million, at one agency: D'Arcy Masius Benton and Bowles of New York (see page 7 in the March issue).

Now it is understood that Hasbro is down to a handful of ad agencies in a review of its Playskool account. The business is handled by Griffin Bacal of New York. Another Hasbro agency, Grey Advertising, also of New York, and the incumbent are reported to be among the list of contenders for the assignment.

- In other account news, Pizza Hut has consolidated its kids promotional business with Goodby Silverstein of San Francisco.

Video to build character

About 2,000 schools, youth centers and civic organizations across the U.S. hosted screenings of *Kids for Character*, a 60-minute video featuring Tom Selleck that is aimed at teaching kids the difference between right and wrong.

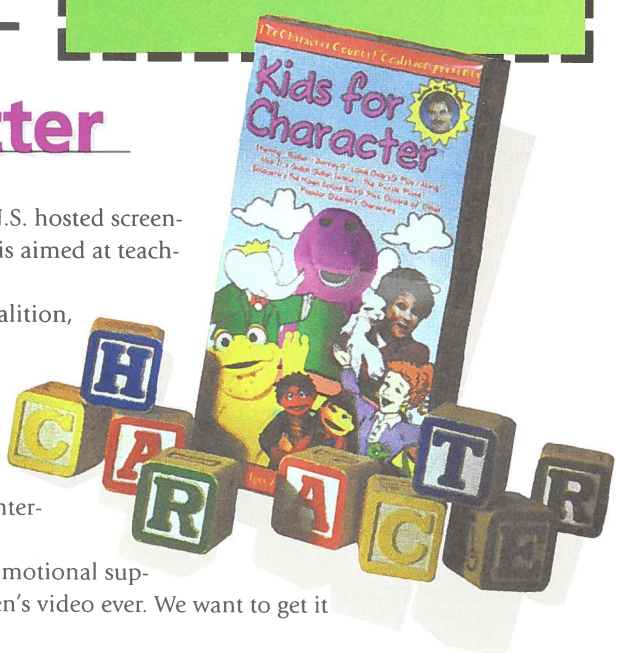
Produced by Universal Studios Florida for the Character Counts! Coalition, a partnership of 100 educational and youth-serving organizations, the video incorporates 30 of the most popular characters in children's television and literature.

The characters in the video teach viewers the "six pillars of character": trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship.

Michael Josephson, founder of the coalition, says the video is the centerpiece of a campaign to combat declining values in America.

"On its own, the video would be a best seller, but with the active promotional support of member organizations, it may well be the highest-selling children's video ever. We want to get it into every home with young children."

The video comes with a 32-page activity booklet. It was released in late April, and is being distributed in the U.S. and Canada by Richardson, Texas-based Lyrick Studios.



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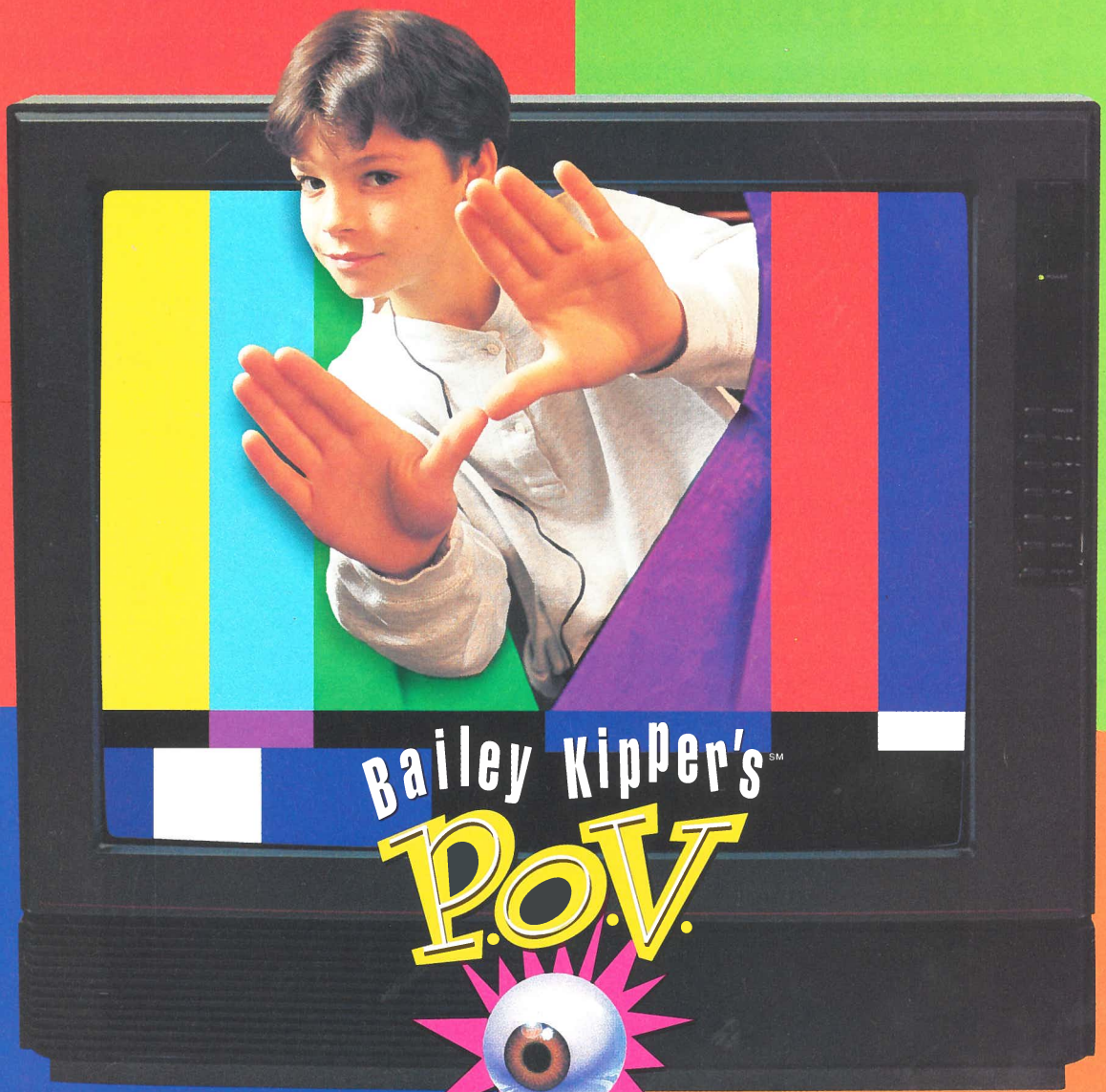

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Disney, McDonald's talk deal

by Eric Schmuckler

In an expected alliance between two of the world's premier children's marketing organizations, the Walt Disney Co. and McDonald's Corp. are said to be on the verge of announcing a 10-year pact to co-promote a wide variety of Disney properties.

The talked-about deal would redraw the map in the marketing of kids entertainment and in the burger wars over family business.

Details were unconfirmed, but McDonald's was reportedly prepared to commit annual royalty payments of $100 million for 10 years to lock up the rights to use Disney's characters from film, TV and home-video properties for its Happy Meal promotions, with as many as 14 to 17 tie-ins per year.

The restaurant chain would also become a major sponsor of the company's Animal Kingdom theme park in Florida. There was no announcement at press time, and neither company would comment.

The recent talks grew out of an intense bidding war between McDonald's and Burger King over the rights to tie in to *Hercules*, Disney's animated film event for the summer of 1997.

But the seeds go back to 1990, when Disney and McDonald's had a falling out over marketing for the studio's *Dick Tracy* feature. The restaurant chain had also just turned down *Beauty and the Beast* reportedly because of concerns over the film's heavy orientation towards females.

There was just too much friction between the two giants, both accustomed to setting their own agendas.

That rift opened the way for Burger King to sweep up the marketing rights to a series of Disney blockbusters, including *Beauty and the Beast*, *Aladdin*, *The Lion King*, *Pocahontas*, *Toy Story* and this summer's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. BK spends upwards of $45 million in advertising these promotions, plus 60 cents apiece for the giveaway toys. Packaging, store decorations and other promotional frills push the total tab for one of these extravaganzas up near $100 million.

Disney favorites *The Lion King*, *Toy Story* and *Pocahontas*

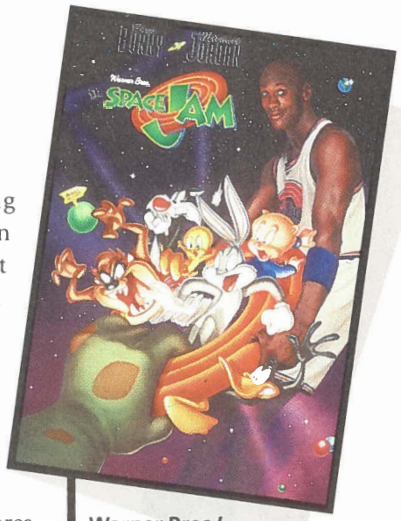
But they have proven a solid investment for BK, drawing an avalanche of customers. In its *Toy Story* promotion last fall, BK gave away 35 million toys plus eight million hastily printed trading cards, and sold another 15 million hand puppets at $1.99.

Kids, of course, bring their parents along, and each Kids Club meal is part of an average bill of around $8.

By holding on to a portion of the incremental business driven by these mega-promotions, Burger King has gained market share.

That's why McDonald's, heeding the pleas of its franchisees, basically threw its wallet on the table in the bidding for Disney.

Although Burger King knocked itself out on Disney's behalf, it couldn't match the money or global clout of its archrival. In the U.S., McDonald's has nearly twice the outlets that Burger King does, almost 12,000 versus 6,600, but its real advantage is overseas, where it has 6,000 stores and is growing fast.



Warner Bros.' *Space Jam*

Kids meals tie-ins have been sold on a country-by-country basis, but in recent years, McDonald's has made an effort to obtain property licenses in worldwide deals. As toy companies go global and international markets mature, licensed properties become more attractive.

"The kids stuff plays a huge part in that [international] growth," says an executive close to McDonald's marketing efforts.

At the same time, studios like Disney are increasingly interested in rolling out their properties to a global market.

McDonald's will apparently be tied to Disney exclusively, with perhaps one "out" a year to do a non-Disney property, such as this fall's *Space Jam* project from Warner Bros., starring NBA basketball star Michael Jordan.

But outside deals may be subject to a Disney veto.

How smoothly the two companies will work together over such a long period, given their past difficulties, is an interesting question.

Burger King would not comment on the impending deal, but the loss of Disney would be a major blow.

On the plus side, the chain has earned its stripes as a strong marketing partner and would have its pick of all other entertainment tie-ins. And many studios, from Warner Bros. to Fox to DreamWorks, are ramping up their efforts in family entertainment, both in features and on TV.

But, still, there aren't many properties that can compete with Disney's in kid appeal. Two of the major films mentioned for next summer, *Batman & Robin* and *The Lost World*, a sequel to *Jurassic Park*, are both likely to carry PG-13 ratings, rendering them off-limits for a kids meal tie-in.

There's no shortage of other kids properties that might make for successful promotions, but few will be huge traffic-builders in the Disney scale.

Other fast food chains, increasingly playing in the kids meal arena, would also feel shockwaves from the expected Disney-McDonald's deal. Disney has parceled out its smaller properties to a variety of players: Hardee's for *Homeward Bound II* and KFC for its *Timon & Pumbaa* TV series.

These chains will increasingly be looking to other kids suppliers, including the movie studios, TV players like Saban and Fox Kids, and comic book publishers Marvel and DC.

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GUS & THE CYBERBUDS LEARNING ADVENTURE SERIES

License for *The Crypt*

Nelvana Marketing, the Los Angeles-based licensing subsidiary of Nelvana, has launched a wide-ranging licensing campaign around the television series *Secrets of the Cryptkeeper's Haunted House.*

The show will begin airing on CBS's Saturday morning kids lineup this fall.

The live-action *Cryptkeeper* is already a major licensing franchise and the subject of a continuing TV series on HBO and Fox.

The Nelvana licensing program will position *Cryptkeeper* in board games, figures, accessories, gifts, novelties and back-to-school items.

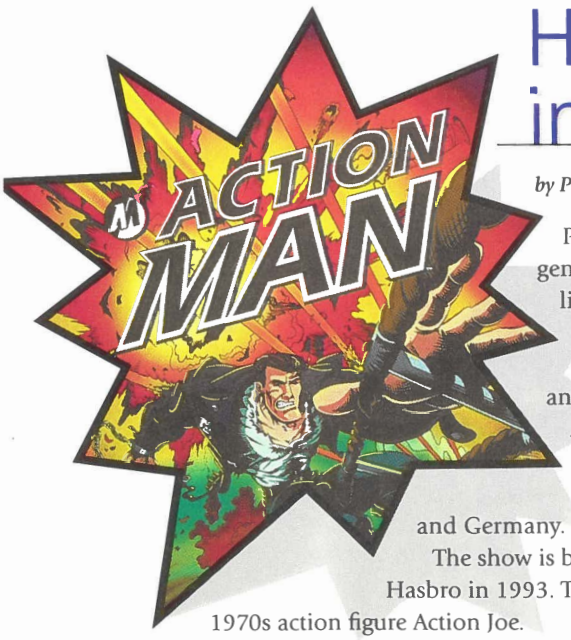
Nelvana has also developed licenses for a new line of Cryptkeeper Halloween accessories, as well as paper goods and collectible figures.

Secrets of the Cryptkeeper's Haunted House is an adventure game show that has two teams of two kids competing through questions, riddles and physical challenges as they try to unlock as many of the Cryptkeeper's secrets as they can.

Copyright in Munich

Copyright Promotions Europe, a division of The Copyright Promotions Licensing Group, has opened a new licensing operation in Germany.

The office will be based in Munich and will be headed by managing director Katarina Dietrich, formerly joint managing director of Merchandising Muenchen, a leading German licensing company.



Hasbro goes into *Action*

by Pascale Paoli

PARIS: France 2 has launched a new genre of animation series that includes live-action sequences. *Extreme Mission, the Adventures of Action Man* (26 x 30) airs every Wednesday morning, and was produced by DIC Entertainment. Actor Mark Griffin has the leading role. The series also launched in Great Britain (BSkyB), Spain, Italy and Germany.

The show is based on an Action Man toy created by Hasbro in 1993. The toy is an updated version of the 1970s action figure Action Joe.

The show is being promoted by Hasbro France through billboards and games. The company has also developed a significant licensing and merchandising program, with France as the leading market, along with Great Britain.

3D License, Hasbro's French licensing division, has already signed up 16 contracts for licenses in sports gear, games and toys, bags, watches and clocks and confectionery products. These items will be in stores for September and a fast food operation will come on board in November.

McDonald's Restaurants and French Quick are cited as possible promotional partners.

People in new jobs

PETER H. MALEN
Vice President, International, Toy Biz

Career at a Glance

- Graduated from Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota, with a degree in business and journalism.
- Rose through the financial department of General Mills with assignments in planning and analysis.
- Developed international marketing organizations at Parker Brothers and Universal Matchbox.
- Founded Intermark Development Ltd. and provided marketing and product services to the international toy and gift industries.
- Joined Children's Television Workshop as vice president, international operations of the products group. Subsequently was named regional vice president, the Americas.

The New Job

- Appointed vice president, international of Toy Biz and is responsible for developing Toy Biz's worldwide marketing and sales capabilities for the entire product range including the subsidiary companies.

The Challenge

- "Toy Biz has great product based on the universally popular Marvel Entertainment characters, as well as the primary licenses in the broader media industry. With the spread of media across borders, we intend to capitalize on the domestic success of our licensed and non-licensed products by broadening our exposure in all of the international markets."

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Marvel-lous opportunities

by Ed Kirchdoerffer

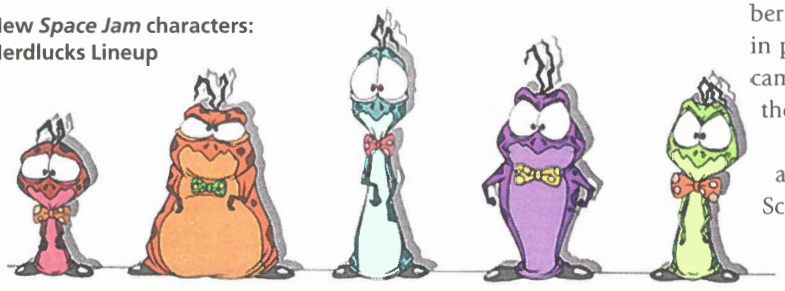
Marvel Entertainment Group is seeking new licensees in the apparel, jewelry and accessories categories for its roster of comic book hero characters.

The licenses have become available after Toy Biz, which had handled these product areas for Marvel, decided to focus exclusively on Marvel's toy line. Current licensing will be done through Marvel Characters.

Activity in this area is currently limited to specialty categories such as hats and underwear. The company is negotiating with several manufacturers and hopes to have contracts signed by the end of this month. Time constraints may limit retail opportunities for the fall of 1996, when an animated version of its property *The Incredible Hulk* debuts on UPN. Marvel hopes to have a full line of apparel licenses running at full speed. After *Hulk*, the next big property to move to an animated series will be *Silver Surfer* in the fall of 1997.

The available licenses will give manufacturers access to new and classic Marvel characters including *Spider-Man*, *X-Men*, *Captain America*, *The Fantastic Four* and *Iron Man*.

New *Space Jam* characters: Nerdlucks Lineup



Sooty signs 'em up

by Janine Gibson

LONDON: Puppet star Sooty celebrates his 48th birthday this year, and attended London's Worldwide Licensing Exposition for the first time.

The trade fair, for all involved in merchandising popular characters, "helped to realize Sooty's full licensing potential," says Matthew Corbett, who took over Sooty duties from his father 20 years ago. Chatsworth Enterprises, which manages the licensing program for Sooty, has already signed over 30 licenses covering books, videos, toys, food and clothing.

"He has the potential to be Britain's leading licensed character," says Corbett.

At 48, Sooty is, according to the *Guinness Book of Records*, the U.K.'s most enduring character, and was last year voted best character in the Children's ITV awards. His show, *Sooty and Co.* (produced independently for Granada TV since 1993 by Sooty International) averages 3.6 million viewers on CITV and a new series is in production for air in September.

The puppet, who never speaks (preferring to use a member of the Corbett family as mouthpiece), has also featured in promotions for mobile phones and breakfast cereals and campaigns to raise funds for the Royal National Institute for the Blind.

In recent years, his friend Sweep the dog has been added, along with extra characters Soo and Little Cousin Scampi.

Warner Bros.' new look

Warner Bros. Consumer Products has created new art programs for the 76 North American licensees who have signed on to its upcoming feature *Space Jam*.

The licensees cover a wide variety of categories including apparel, accessories, games, housewares, video games and publishing. Playmates and WB Toys have also created a line of Space Jam toys.

The movie—which brings together *Looney Tunes* characters such as Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck and Porky Pig, a variety of new characters and NBA basketball star Michael Jordan—is scheduled for release November 15.

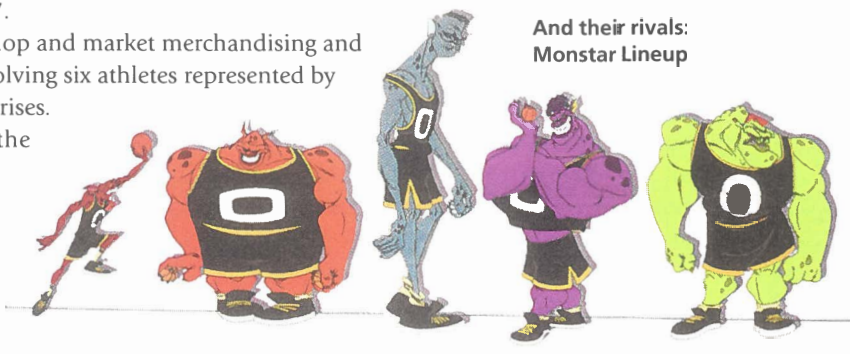
Licensed merchandise and new characters from the movie will begin appearing at mass-market retail outlets in September.

In other news, Warner Bros. Consumer Products will be unveiling its WB Sport brand logo, promoting the company's new sports licensing division, at Licensing '96 in New York. The show runs June 25 to 27.

The division was created to develop and market merchandising and promotional programs initially involving six athletes represented by Falk Associates Management Enterprises.

They include Patrick Ewing of the New York Knicks, Juwan Howard of the Washington Bullets, Bryant Reeves of the Vancouver Grizzlies, Glen Rice and Tyrone Bogues of the Charlotte Hornets, and Bobby Hurley of the Sacramento Kings.

And their rivals: Monstar Lineup



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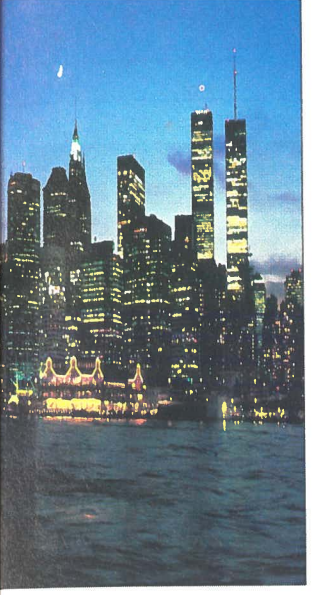

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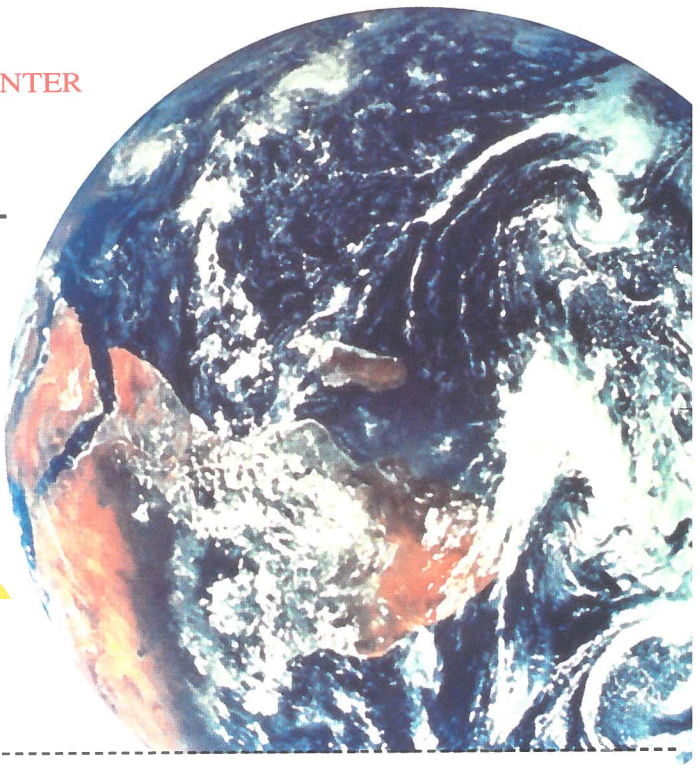

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EXHIBIT HALL REGISTRATION

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- ☐ 16 Footwear
- ☐ 17 Gifts/Novelties
- ☐ 18 Home Furnishings
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Licensing Diary—**Garfield**

by Ed Kirchdoerffer

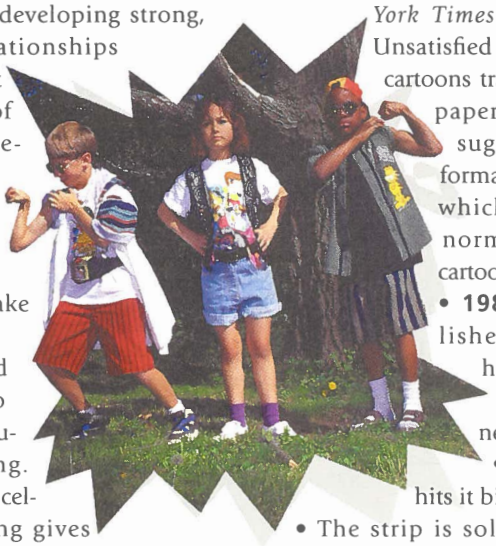
For a fat, lazy feline, Garfield has sure been one busy kitty. Garfield, the creation of Indiana native Jim Davis, consistently ranks as one of the top comic strip characters. He is featured in over 2,500 newspapers around the world, on award-winning TV specials and series, and in over 25 books.

Davis created Garfield in 1978, based on his memories of the 25 farm cats he grew up with. He originally worked out of his basement, but as the character grew in popularity, he formed Paws, Inc. in 1981.

In 1994, Paws bought the Garfield copyright from United Feature Syndicate because Davis felt no company could care more about the character than his could. Paws now handles every aspect of the creative, promotion, licensing and merchandising of Garfield-related products.

Garfield has about 100 domestic and over 350 international licensees. The property is unique among licensed comic strip characters in that it has no master toy licensee. With the exception of plush (which Paws handles internally), there is little activity in the toy sector.

This doesn't seem to bother Davis at all. Paws spokesperson Kim Campbell says that the company isn't concerned about lining up the most amount of licensees possible so much as developing strong, loyal, long-term relationships with companies that respect the integrity of Garfield, exhibit creativity and seem fun to work with. As Jim Davis says, "If we take care of the cat, the cat will take care of us."



Each year, Garfield licensees trek to Indiana for Paws' annual Big Deal gathering. Part business and part celebration, the meeting gives licensees the chance to preview upcoming Garfield activity and attend workshops to learn how to better utilize the character.

Garfield has had several promotional partners in the past, but it wasn't until Paws took control in 1994 that the property was aggressively marketed for promotional tie-ins. In the past year, it has partnered with Taco Bell, KFC, Kraft and the International Hockey League, among others. In March, it struck a licensing deal with PetsMart that will give Garfield a large presence in the retail chain's stores. Later this year, it will partner with Subway Restaurants for a kids meal giveaway.

Garfield in his many incarnations with creator Jim Davis (above) and on kids clothing (below)

The next big event slated for Garfield is his 20th birthday in 1998. Paws is currently reviewing various promotional ideas for the milestone. It is also looking to further penetrate overseas markets, eyeing possibilities in Japan, China, Russia and India.

Here are some of the highlights that have made Garfield something to purr about:

- **1978:** Garfield debuts on June 19, 1978 in 41 newspapers.
- **1980:** Garfield creator Jim Davis strikes his first licensing deal, with Ballantine Books, which publishes a compilation of the comic strip. The book goes to the top of the *New York Times* best seller list. Unsatisfied with the way his cartoons transfer to standard paperback size, Davis suggests a different format (5-1/2 x 8-1/2), which becomes the norm for publishing cartoon compilations.
- **1981:** Davis establishes Paws, Inc. to handle the growing art and creative needs of licensees.
- **1982:** Garfield hits it big:
  - The strip is sold to the 1000th newspaper;
  - Davis wins Best Humor Strip Cartoonist award;
  - The first Garfield TV special becomes the highest-rated animated special of the year;
  - Garfield graces the cover of *People*;
  - Seven Garfield books occupy the *New York Times* best seller list—simultaneously.
  - Paws holds its first Big Deal licensee summit gathering.
- **1984:** A Garfield balloon debuts in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.
- **1986-87:** Garfield's popularity soars when Garfield "Stuck on You" car dolls become a sensation.
- **1987:** Garfield becomes the third cartoon to appear in over 2,000 papers.
- First fast food promotion with McDonald's moves over 41 million units of Garfield merchandise.
- **1988:** Saturday morning *Garfield & Friends* animated series debuts.
- **1989:** The NFL drafts Garfield for joint licensing ventures.
- **1993:** Jim Davis is inducted into the Licensing Merchandiser's Hall of Fame.
- **1994:** Paws purchases the Garfield copyright from United Feature Syndicate. The company assumes all responsibility for licensing, promotion and merchandising of the property.
- **1995:** Garfield appears in over 2,500 newspapers.
- **1996:** A deal is signed with retail pet chain PetsMart for a line of over 100 Garfield-related products that will hit the shelves by the fourth quarter of the year.
- Successful promotional partner deals include KFC and Kraft; later in 1996, Garfield will partner with Subway.

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Nick in prime time

by Ed Kirchdoerffer

As Nickelodeon readies to launch into prime time this fall, it is mulling its strategy for 1997—be it continued penetration into prime time, or a commitment to establish a presence in the very competitive Saturday morning arena or some other day part. It will base its decision on how to best meet its audience's needs.

The practice of serving kids where they are being underserved has been Nickelodeon's mission from the get-go. It was the strategy used when the channel launched Nick Toons on previously kid-unfriendly Sunday mornings in 1991, and SNICK, on Saturday nights, two years later. The same principle is being applied for the prime-time expansion this fall.

"We believe the networks have abandoned kids and families in prime time," says Cyma Zarghami, senior vice president and general manager of Nickelodeon. "It's a perfect time for us to be there."

Nickelodeon will air a half-hour of original programming from 8:00 to 8:30 p.m. (ET) on weeknights, beginning October 7. Sunday night programming debuts in December.

Where the channel expands beyond this point is still unclear. Long-range strategic planning, usually made during the summer, may be put on hold until the fall, as the impact of its prime-time launch will dictate the direction the network will turn in 1997.

One of the day parts that Nickelodeon has considered for future expansion is Saturday mornings. "Saturday mornings are something that's on our radar, but they're not something that's on our immediate planning schedule to go after," Zarghami says.

The channel has never aggressively programmed this traditional stronghold of the broadcast networks, but it receives very good ratings during this time slot nonetheless, even though it only airs reruns of shows like *Rugrats*, *Doug* and acquired properties from the Henson and Warner Bros. libraries. The question asked internally is: How much better would the channel do on Saturday mornings if it made an all-out effort?

Zarghami credits Nickelodeon's healthy Saturday morning audience to brand loyalty. "I think the number of hours kids watch per week isn't growing; it's where they are watching that is shifting. The choices are more competitive," she says. "We have proven time and time again that by serving this audience consistently and loyally with stuff that they want and things we think are good for them, we've been able to be successful."

MCA streamlines TV operations

Described as a move to further streamline and consolidate television operations, Universal Family Entertainment and Universal Cartoon Studios have been folded into the operations of MCA Television Entertainment (MTE).

Barbara Fisher, president of MTE, will take on all family entertainment activities in addition to her current duties.

Universal Family Entertainment president Jeff Segal steps down from that position, but will continue to develop and produce projects for the MCA Television Group.

UFE projects that will now shift to MTE include *Casper*, a series airing on Fox Children's Network; *Earthworm Jim*, airing on Kids WB; and *Savage Dragon*, a USA Network show.

MTE is involved in such TV shows as the event miniseries *Peter Benchley's The Beast*, which aired on NBC April 28 and 29, and *Twilight Man*, which airs on June 15 on the Starz! pay cable network.

People in new jobs

TOM HARBECK
Senior Vice President, Marketing and On-Air Promotion/ Creative Director, U.S. Television, Nickelodeon

Career at a Glance

- Received a BA in English from Trinity College and a master of education from Stanford University.
- Joined Chiat/Day in New York in 1984 as an account person and producer.
- In 1990, came on board as a producer at Ogilvy & Mather Advertising in New York.
- The next year, moved on to the position of vice president of creative services on-air promotion for TNT.
- Became senior vice president, marketing for TBS Superstation in 1992.
- In 1993, joined Nickelodeon as group vice president, consumer marketing and associate creative director for Nickelodeon/Nick at Nite. Was appointed senior vice president of marketing and associate worldwide creative director for Nickelodeon/Nick at Nite.

The New Job

- In this newly created position, Harbeck oversees Nickelodeon/Nick at Nite and Nick at Nite's TV Land on-air promotion, assumes the role of U.S. creative director for television and continues to manage all marketing activities for the Nickelodeon brands.

The Challenge

"First, and most important, is to connect with kids regardless of the medium (that is, the back of a box, a premium or a sweepstakes idea). Each is an opportunity, regardless of size, shape or cost, to be a kid-driven experience consistent with Nickelodeon. Second, to create great ideas that kids want. Ideas for kids come before ideas for products or ancillary messages. Finally, to be consistent on-air, in-store, over the radio with a single relevant and compelling expression. Often, varying lead times and multiple creative groups make this the hardest. If we do all three, then everyone benefits from the awareness, interest and loyalty of kids to the idea that we and our marketing partners created."

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KidSafety promotes proper hygiene

by Ed Kirchdoerffer

KidSafety of America, a publisher of video, print and audio instructional materials for educators, has released *The Germ Busters*, its first video specifically geared toward the consumer market.

The video, starring Kemi and Zemi from Nickelodeon's popular *Roundhouse* series, is an entertaining, humorous learning experience that instructs young children (ages 3 to 7) about the importance of proper personal hygiene.

KidSafety of America's owners and founders, husband-and-wife team Peter and Margaret Osilaja, decided to expand to consumer products because they believe that more than ever, it's vital for children to learn about the importance of preventing the spread of germs. Previous KidSafety titles include *Child Safety Outdoors*, *Child Safety at Home* and *Casey's First Bus Ride*.

The Germ Busters features a heavy African-American and Hispanic presence, something that is lacking in most preschool videos.

The company has no immediate plans to advertise the video. It is relying on word of mouth and good reviews, which tend to be more effective than ordinary advertising in the independent children's market. The video can be obtained by mail order (1-800-524-1159), as well as in libraries and select video outlets. It retails for US$14.95 and is available this month.

TV code is dragging

by Pascale Paoli

PARIS: French Prime Minister Alain Juppé is not ruling out legislative action to curb TV violence. He says that industry efforts to develop a code of standards for public and private channels are moving too slowly.

Hervé Bourges, president of the French broadcast regulator, Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel, says he's thinking about classifying programs according to their degree of acceptability by young viewers. This classification could be created either by special industry groups or by the channels themselves.

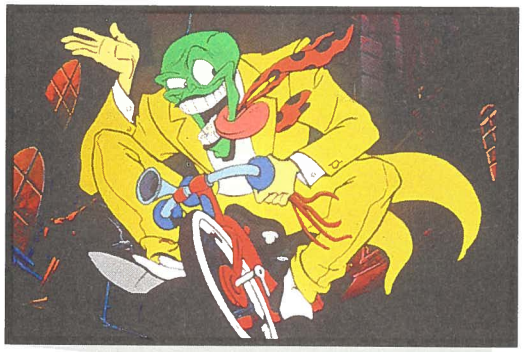
Meanwhile, the CSA is working along with TF1, France 2, France 3 and M6 so as to establish a code of "good behavior." Bourges also feels that the campaign against violence should be broadened to include the educational system.

CBS touts new shows

by Eric Schmuckler

CBS touted its new kids shows and some under-rated current successes in a presentation to advertisers in New York two months after the upfront advertising market. Buyers liked what they saw, but CBS faces tougher competition than ever in the kids arena.

Although the network's Saturday morning kids rating fell 20 percent this season, it will bring back six of 10 shows, including four freshman series, led by its hit duo of Jim Carrey adaptations. *The Mask* and *Ace Ventura* bucked the ratings losses thoughout network-



CBS hit *The Mask*

dom by increasing kids viewership in their time periods.

"Last year, we had so many new shows," says Judy Price, vice president of children's programs for CBS. "It's difficult to support them all with promotion. This year, the whole thing is to grow those freshman shows."

CBS will tackle that with a new on-air look and logo and added promotional resources.

Price calls *Timon & Pumbaa*, which leads off the schedule at 8 a.m., an impeccable buddy comedy from Disney that needs no tinkering whatsoever. But she wants to take another returnee, *Twisted Tales of Felix the Cat*, and "untwist it a little by adding a well-known convention called 'story.'" The imaginative cartoon shorts may have been "a little too cerebral for many kids," but she promises not to soften *Felix* for its new 8:30 a.m. time slot.

Of CBS's new shows, *Project G.eeK.eR* is an animated action-comedy from Doug Tennapel and Doug Langdale, the duo who created the Monty Python-esque *Earthworm Jim* on WB.

"Disney and Dreamworks both wanted it," says Price, but the artists chose financing from Columbia's new animation unit that gave them an ownership position.

Price pitches the live-action *Bailey Kipper's P.O.V.* as a cross between *The Wonder Years* and *Dream On*. It's about an 11-year-old boy videotaping his secret diary, and features tongue-in-cheek video effects and clips to augment the action. The charming show, created by Mark Waxman of *Beakman's World* fame, got the strongest audience reaction.

"It's so empowering for kids in a positive, life-lesson way, not in terms of hitting their little brothers," says Price.

Secrets of the Cryptkeeper's Haunted House is a live-action game show that looks like Nick's *Secrets of the Hidden Temple* with a *Goosebumps* twist. The show will be shot at a Cryptkeeper theme-park attraction Universal is building in Orlando.

Bailey and *Cryptkeeper* qualify as educational shows under F.C.C. guidelines, fulfilling a promise CBS parent Westinghouse made to air more educational kids fare.

But Price says she wasn't hampered by that commitment: "There were any number of ways CBS could have satisfied that—we could have done it on Sunday morning, or before the kids schedule on Saturday. I submitted the shows I wanted to put on."

Some buyer reaction was lukewarm, but Gary Carr, senior VP at Ammirati & Puris/Lintas says, "I thought it was pretty good. The Carrey stuff does well, *Timon* is good and *Bailey's P.O.V.* looks like a Nick show. But you've got to remember it's up against four other schedules on Saturday."

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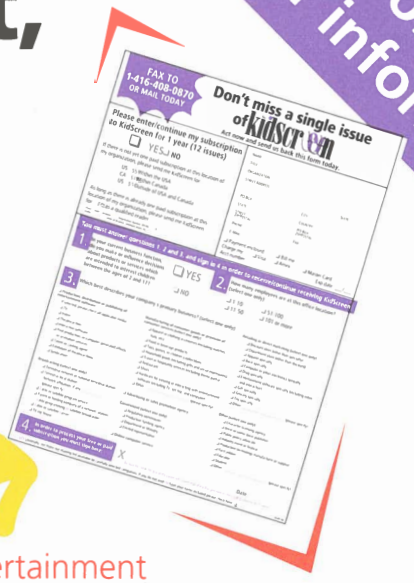
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GMTV goes *Bananas*

by Janine Gibson

LONDON: ITV breakfast broadcaster GMTV has bought up the top-rated Australian children's series *Bananas in Pyjamas*.

GMTV is launching the series in a blaze of publicity, hoping the success of the show in Australia and the U.S. will rub off in the U.K.

The mischievous banana twins, B1 and B2, have enormous marketing and spin-off opportunities, having reached biggest-selling children's video status in their native Australia. Retailers across the U.S. predict the characters will be one of the top 10 toy products in 1996.

GMTV needs a new hit to boost its Saturday morning children's lineup. *Bananas in Pyjamas* will fit into the slot that introduced *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* to the U.K.

TCC scores big

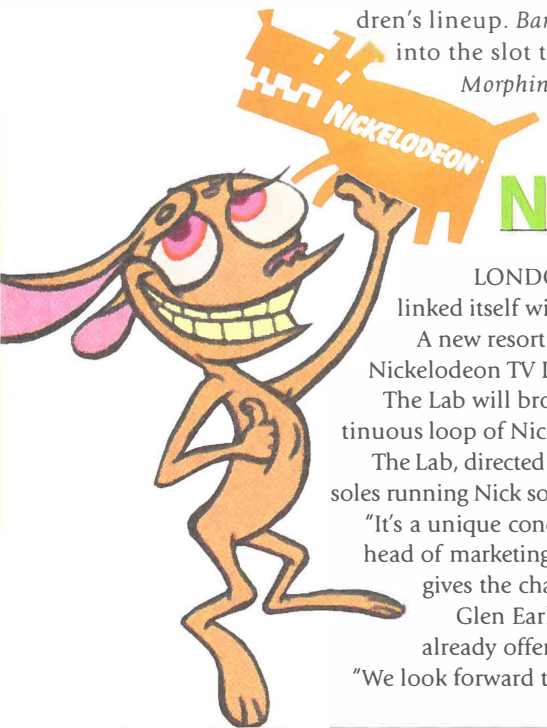
LONDON: In a landmark deal for TCC, Channel 4 has acquired over 30 hours of programming for its children's schedule.

The broadcaster has acquired 26 x 30 minutes of *Earthworm Jim*, 13 x 30 minutes of *Hang Time* and 26 x 30 minutes of *Flash Gordon* from TCC, which acted as co-producer on *Earthworm Jim*.

Hang Time, an NBC production (as is *Saved by the Bell*) that is also successfully screened by Channel 4, is a series featuring a group of high-school basketball players. It is expected to complement the channel's recent acquisition of rights to screen the NBA league matches in the U.K.

Lucinda Whiteley, Channel 4 commissioning editor for children's programs, is "delighted" to add these high-profile shows.

For Joan Lofts, head of programming at TCC, the deal is perhaps more significant. "It shows the quality of programming the channel is investing in," she says. **JG**



Nick links with Alton Towers

LONDON: In a first-of-its-kind tie-in deal, kids satellite and cable channel Nickelodeon has linked itself with Britain's answer to Disneyland: Alton Towers.

A new resort family hotel, located within the theme park, contains a room known as The Nickelodeon TV Lab, designed in conjunction with the Alton Towers team.

The Lab will broadcast live Nickelodeon programming between 6 a.m. and 7 p.m. After 7 p.m., a continuous loop of Nick's top programs will be shown.

The Lab, directed with images taken from shows like *Ren and Stimpy* and *Rugrats*, also features game consoles running Nick software. The aim is to provide a "kid-friendly environment" in which to watch the channel.

"It's a unique concept and a further example of Nickelodeon's development as a channel off air," says head of marketing Sally Urquhart. Nick already has a studio in London, but Alton Towers' Midlands base gives the channel "the chance to reach other kids as well."

Glen Earlham, divisional marketing director of Alton Towers, feels the deal adds to the magic already offered by the hotel.

"We look forward to furthering our relationship with Nickelodeon," he adds. **JG**

People in new jobs

BRIAN MILLER
Vice President, Production
Hanna-Barbera Cartoons

Career at a Glance

- In 1979, started as an intern on *That's Incredible!* by The Landsberg Co. in Los Angeles.
- Served as a story researcher, then a segment producer on *That's Incredible!* from 1980 to 1982.
- For the next three years, worked as a segment producer and story editor for several magazine-format shows, including *Lifestyle Magazine*. Earned a BA in radio, television and film from California State University in Northridge in 1984.
- In 1986, made a brief leap into animation as a production assistant at Marvel Productions of New York.
- Later that year, joined DIC Enterprises of Burbank, California, as an associate producer. Promoted to production supervisor in 1990. In 1993, became vice president of animation production. In this position, oversaw domestic and overseas production on more than 600 half-hours of TV programs for network and syndication, including *Where on Earth is Carmen San Diego?* and *The New Adventures of Madeline*.

The New Job

- Joined the Los Angeles office of Hanna-Barbera Cartoons as vice president, production. Supervises all current TV and video production for Hanna-Barbera, including *World Premiere Toons*, *Cave Kids* and *The Real Adventures of Jonny Quest*. Reports to Sherry Gunther, senior vice president, production. Will assist as Hanna-Barbera launches *The Jetsons* as a prime-time series and two new series based on seven-minute short cartoons that piloted on *World Premiere Toons* in 1996.

The Challenge

"My goal here is really to attract and retain the best creative talent in the business."

SPECIAL REPORT

LICENSING 96

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From June 25th through to the 27th, the international licensing community will gather at the Jacob K. Javits Center in New York for Licensing 96, sponsored by LIMA. KidScreen's July issue includes a special report and bonus distribution for the event. The report will examine important issues and trends in the licensing of children's products. As well, interviews with industry leaders will explore such topical questions as how to walk the fine line between building awareness and over-promoting.

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L.A. Screenings an international event

by Laura Pratt

It began 30 years ago as an effort by a single network to help its foreign interests get the best kick at the American programming can.

Today, it's a major event on the buying and selling calendars of broadcasters worldwide.

The L.A. Screenings, which takes place over a couple of weeks in late May and into early June, is primarily and almost exclusively an opportunity for Hollywood to screen its fall prime-time offerings to international buyers. It's the first market to follow the studios' announcements of their schedules—in the early spring—and it attracts purchasers from across the globe, anxious to beat out their competitors by securing the big-name, hit-bound, prime-time shows.

But time has seen the event evolve to include the odd bit of different types of programming—including kids.

A lot of studios take advantage of the concentrated convergence of international buyers by trotting out all of their shows: new and old, prime-time and otherwise. And a lot of the buyers, many of whom have travelled long distances, see the L.A. Screenings as a one-stop market, and fill their shopping carts with programs for every day part.

Jack Singer is the guy who started it all. In the mid-sixties, he was working as head of program buying at ABC International. At that time, ABC was trying to set up a string of worldwide networks. It had invested in TV stations in the Philippines, Australia, Japan and Latin America. The goal of this exercise, recalls Singer, was to help these individual stations buy the best of American programming.

"I decided one thing that would enable us to do this well would be to get the station people to come to Los Angeles at the time the networks were announcing their new schedules. They could go around to the various studios and distributors, look at the pilots and decide right then and there which ones they wanted to buy. That way, they could get a jump on their competing stations, who wouldn't be able to buy the shows until the distributors got around to offering them to them—three, four, five months later."

In the beginning, fewer than a dozen foreign station representatives visited L.A. But the distributors, who held the foreign rights to networks' foreign programming, embraced the idea enthusiastically. "It allowed them a chance to show off," says Singer.

And they did more than that. The L.A. hosts showed their visitors the kind of good time only Hollywood can. They threw parties for them, had lunches for them, took them on tours of sets and invited the stars to join in.

"The buyers were very impressed with the treatment that they were accorded, and this helped us sell more shows," Singer explains. "Gradually, more and more buyers started coming, and not only from the stations that ABC was buying for. When the competing stations in the market finally wised up to what was happening, they decided to come also. It just started building from there."

And build it has. Today, one studio may get upwards of 450 people coming to its screenings alone. Buyers arrive from such far-flung bases as Brazil, Puerto Rico, Australia, Eastern Europe, New Zealand, China, Canada, the Middle East and all over Europe.

"As more and more competitiveness began in Europe, more Europeans started showing up because they weren't prepared to let programs go to someone else," explains Matthew Ody, vice president of international sales at NBC International. "Previously, it was a very leisurely arrangement."

But Ody points out that it's the buyers themselves who have turned the non-event into an event. "No one asked these people to show up. It's not like MIP, where we track these people down." He says the screenings really took on a life of their own five or six years ago.

Some of the attending countries are also sending producers, eager to take advantage of the gathering of international buyers with money to spend. Joseph DiCerto, who is in charge of trade shows for CBS, says it's from these sources that kids programming often becomes available. "Other companies are renting out hotel rooms and trying to contact these buyers. They're saying, 'since you're here anyway, can we get you to come over and take a look at these programs?'"

Largely, he says, these are independent producers and production companies for whom a chance to address such an impressive grouping of international buyers would otherwise be impossible.

A lot of these companies, says Singer, who today acts as an independent consultant to primarily Latin American foreign program buyers, are usually Latin American. "The Europeans go to MIP to screen and buy. But very few of the Latins go to MIP. So the L.A. Screenings are a good market for Latin American producers to sell to Latin American buyers."

That's why L.A. has become perhaps more important for the Latin American sellers than for the Europeans or Asians.

But the Latin American presence attracts others as well. Janet Vissering, manager of program acquisitions and development at Discovery Channel International, says her young company has never attended the L.A. Screenings before. But she is going this year in the hopes of finding programming for her company's Latin American contingent.

"We've heard that, historically, there are a lot of Latin American attendees there," Vissering explains. "And, since our programming is becoming more diverse in Latin America and our network's doing very well there, we want to make sure we get that audience."

Vissering is particularly interested in kids shows, something her network recently started on its Discovery International networks in Latin America. "We're looking for high-quality children's programming that's educational, informational, unique and culturally diverse."

The L.A. Screenings, she hopes, will prove the source for such requirements. "It's not a big festival," she says. "But France is a long way for Latin American producers to go. We're participating in smaller festivals just in case we can find the odd chance for a diamond in the rough."

Erna Staples-Horninger, a representative to Canada with Munich-based Beta Taurus, will also attend this year's L.A. event. She says her company's primary reason for the trip is to pick up prime-time programming, but adds that they usually return with some kind of kids stuff as well.

In that regard, she says, Beta Taurus will break from its usual concentration on animation, and look instead for live-action kids programming.

MTM International might fit the bill. This international distribution arm of MTM Entertainment will be one of the sellers at the screenings this year. There, it will present its first foray into the kids market: a CBS live-action, half-hour children's show called *Bailey Kipper's P.O.V.*

But beyond that, Staples-Horninger says, she likes to arrive in L.A. without any particular expectations. "We go there because we like to get our orientation. We always hope that we will be pleasantly surprised by new trends. Of course, we know what things we wouldn't want: violent kids shows, poor-quality shows and programs in bad taste."

CBS's DiCerto feels it's difficult to predict trends for an international event. "[Trends have] more meaning in specific markets. In the U.S., you may have genre trends. But, when you talk about the world in general, you have varying currents. You may have one thing coming up while another is coming down. Everyone looks for programming to meet the requirements of their market and, obviously, markets vary around the world. For example, in Europe, in children's programming, the big word is non-violence. Whereas, if you go to Japan, that's basically the only thing that sells."

But DiCerto agrees with Staples-Horninger that things are moving, universally, in the direction of action-adventure.

Patricia Ryan of DIC Entertainment is counting on it. It's why she's bringing kids shows like *Tex Avery* and *Street Sharks* to the L.A. Screenings. "It goes in cycles," she says. What's more, Ryan believes there's a renewed interest in superheroes that might make an appearance in the kids programming component of the event.

That there is even a kids programming component, however slender, is consistent with DiCerto's take on the event: "The whole definition of the L.A. Screenings seems to be evolving," he says. "It started out purely as a reflection of the networks' shows for prime time. Now, in some of the smaller markets, the buyers buy everything: adults' and children's fare.

"If I were the producer of some quality children's programming, I would seriously look into the possibility of using L.A. Screenings."

Having said that, he points out that the informality of the L.A. market actually makes it a bit more difficult logistically than its bigger cousins: MIP and NATPE.

Unlike the latter, which are concentrated in one location like a giant supermarket, the L.A. Screenings have no designated home. The event spills out across the city like a flood. Everyone is sprinkled around, in different hotels, juggling their own particular schedules. Trying to lock someone down can be very difficult.

At the same time, DiCerto feels it's much better than the bigger shows in a lot of respects. There, producers only have the attention of program buyers for a half-hour or so before they run off to another stand.

"At the screenings, you set up a schedule so you know who's where and when they're there. And you have the privacy of your own screening facilities, which gives you much better control over the atmosphere so you can make a better-tailored presentation.

"Also, there are usually hundreds and hundreds of exhibitors at a trade show. If someone's there for three or four days and there are 500 exhibitors, you could see how they'd have to allot their time. At the L.A. Screenings, we pre-schedule them a month or so in advance."

It's wonderful, says Staples-Horninger. "You see all these shows of every type in a very concentrated form in one week. It's screening from morning to night. We always attend the L.A. Screenings. It's very important to us."

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E3 builds on first-year success

by Andrea Haman

Some of the latest trends and products in new media for kids are on display as the world's leading developers, publishers, distributors and retailers involved in interactive entertainment descend on the Los Angeles Convention Center for only the second Electronic Entertainment Expo.

In the following Special Report, *KidScreen* takes a look at the cross-over of (mostly animated) film- and television-originated characters to CD-ROMs and on-line services.

Through a series of case histories, we examine some of the issues, including the advantages and disadvantages, in adapting known characters to new media products.

The 1996 Electronic Entertainment Expo, taking place from May 16 to 18 at the Los Angeles Convention Center, has big shoes to fill. Its debut in 1995 as the trade show of the interactive entertainment industry won it acclaim for being the second largest first-year trade show in the last 25 years, according to the Los Angeles-based magazine *Tradeshow Week*. A bigger reason for pride is that, by its second year only, sellers and buyers alike are hailing E3 as this industry's most important show.

"I think if you're not at E3, you're noticeable by your absence because really all the big players (with) any kind of interactive entertainment or education product all have some kind of presence at E3," says Eric Winkler, marketing promotions manager of Broderbund Software, based in Novato, California.

While Winkler says Comdex is still a bigger show than E3, E3 is the "best focused" because it limits itself to entertainment and education software and products, rather than exploring technology in-depth.

Broderbund Software, which develops and distributes its own titles, in addition to working with distributors, will be meeting buyers who want to boost their collection of software titles or add titles to their stores for the first time. An advantage to E3 over smaller shows is that Broderbund can showcase its full product line, not just a handful of titles.

"For an emerging company like ourselves with what we consider to be some very hot, cutting-edge product, it's paramount to be there," says Steve Grossman, chairman and CEO of Stamford, Connecticut-based American Softworks Corporation. The three-year-old software publisher will be launching 11 titles, equal to $14 million worth of development, for Sony PlayStation, Sega Saturn, PC/CD-ROM and Nintendo Ultra 64.

Davidson & Associates, located in Torrance, California, will be also highlighting new releases, consisting of 10 CD-ROMs, and current products. Not only is the show an opportunity to meet with retailers, says Linda Duttenhaver, D & A's director of corporate communications, but it also provides the chance to introduce the company and its library to the media.

Retailers say E3 is the best way to find out what's on the market and what's soon to be available.

"We go and really find out what's new, and make sure that we don't get tunnel vision in what we're doing and that we understand »

what the rest of the world is showing and doing," says Mary Kwan, vice president and general merchandising manager of children's with Sears, Roebuck & Co. of Hoffman Estates, Illinois.

"We don't write purchase orders at the show," Kwan adds. "But certainly a lot of purchase ideas are crystallized from the show."

Jim Hamilton, vice president and general merchandise manager for Fort Worth, Texas-based Computer City, says E3's performance in 1995 bodes well for 1996. "Last year was very worthwhile. We had some very productive meetings with vendors."

Uniting developers, publishers, distributors and retailers under one roof once a year to meet and do business is E3's goal, says Carolyn Rauch, senior vice president of the Interactive Digital Software Association, located in Washington, D.C. The IDSA owns the show, and co-produces it with MHA Event Management and Infotainment World.

More than 400 exhibitors and 40,000 attendees are expected. The show has been sold out for more than four months before its opening day, and occupies 32 percent more floor space than last year, with 484,000 net square feet, compared to 367,000 in 1995.

Last year's E3 gathering

Athough E3 has grown in physical space since last year, the number of exhibitors may show a decrease due to a consolidation of companies that has taken place during that time. About 440 exhibitors and 40,000 attendees came to E3 in 1995.

The rapid growth of the industry in the last few years demanded a trade show for the interactive entertainment industry alone, says Rauch. According to Link Resources of New York, total retail sales of interactive electronic entertainment software and hardware, including edutainment and educational products, reached $10 billion in the U.S. in 1995.

Before E3 kicked off in 1995, many of the companies at E3 had brought their wares to the Consumer Electronics Show. But exhibiting at CES could be "problematic" for developers and publishers, says American Softworks Corporation's Grossman, because they would only have new titles to trot out at the June show, but would still feel the need to attend the January exhibition.

Not surprisingly, when the IDSA formed in April 1994, its members—publishers of entertainment, edutainment and educational software for all platforms—immediately fixed upon creating a trade show of their own. "(E3) was an initiative of the industry itself," says Rauch.

Compared to Milia, which takes place in Cannes, France, E3 is primarily an American show. About five to 10 percent of exhibitors and a higher share of attendees are from countries other than the U.S. But E3 will be sure to attract more international participants when it kicks off a show in Tokyo, Japan in September. The event's organizers are also looking to bring E3 to Europe and South America.

The May event gets under way with an hour-long panel discussion on the future of the interactive entertainment industry. The heads of eight companies will discuss the issues in a forum called "Chief Executive Roundtable." It's the first event of its kind at E3, and, according to Rauch, the first time these CEOs will be speaking together in a public forum.

Another addition to this year's show is a two-day session of conferences. Speakers are divided among four topics: Predicting the Future: Trends in the Market; Retail, Marketing and Distribution: Playing to Win; The Creative Team: Technology and Content; and Finance, Business and Law: The Rules of the Game.

As for fresh products, attendees can catch their first glimpses of the Apple Pippin and Nintendo Ultra 64 game systems, the second flight of releases for Sony PlayStation and Sega Saturn, and the first big wave of Windows 95 titles.

E3's organizers have been promoting these highlights with direct mail, advertising and public relations campaigns. They have also been raising awareness on-line since December with a Web site (http://www.mha.com/e3/).

Panasonic Interactive Media Company presents the latest education and edutainment PC and Macintosh CD-ROM products

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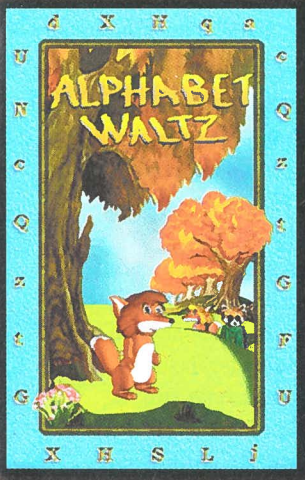
and the learning pals



Alphabet Adventure

Children Will enjoy solving word puzzles for each letter of the alphabet. Puzzles are hidden throughout the enchanting story of Digby, Lydia and their cousin Panda Li.
Unique combination of traditional animation and 3D computer graphics creates a vivid and fun packed environment. In this beautiful world, each letter of the alphabet is presented with an original song and a Quicktime movie.

Phonics Adventure

Phonics Adventure with Sing Along Sam is a musical adventure to teach children how to read phonetically.
12 games and 15 original songs take children through progressive phonics lessons and exercises where songs teach basic phonics rules.
Challenge games and the Hall of Fame screen are provided to motivate children to complete all of the lessons successfully.

Reading Adventure

Kids demonstrate reading skills with the help of an animated character, Kenny Kite.
As a trainee of Kenny Kite's Flight School, children go through 8 rescue missions and a final exam where they must read to succeed. The success of the missions are rewarded with entertaining original songs in a Karaoke Sing-along style.

Radio Addition

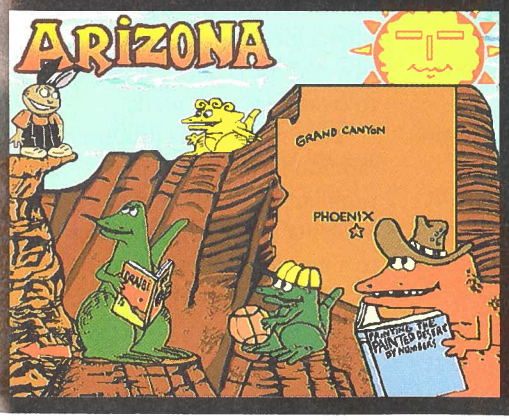
Radio Addition is the first in the Spike and Mike math series. Children can learn the basic concepts of addition with DJ, Spike and Mike in their FM radio station.
15 lessons with entertaining songs teach children the basic concepts of addition.
Challenge games and the Hall of Fame screen are provided to motivate children to complete all of the lessons successfully.

Multiplication World Tour

Multiplication World Tour is the second in the Spike and Mike math series. The DJ duo return as rock musicians on a world tour to teach children the basic concepts of multiplication.
12 lessons and games with a variety of songs teach children the concepts of multiplication. Challenge games and the Hall of Fame screen are provided to motivate children to complete all of the lessons successfully.

Theo The Dinosaur

Based on the book "Theo The Dinosaur" by Phil Yeh, this title encourages children to read books and recycle. Theo and his friends discover that reading is fun and can save them from extinction.
The Story is presented in 32 pages of colorful graphics with many hidden animation to explore. This title also contains useful mini lectures on the solar system, medicine, world geography and herbs.



Dinosaurs Across America

Dinosaurs Across America is the second in the Theo The Dinosaur Social Study series.
Theo and his friends help Patrick Rabbit learn US geography with animated pages and matching puzzles of each state.
Theo and his friends help children learn many different aspects of each state.
There are 2 coloring pages hidden in each state for fun!

Learning Ladder
Interactive Education
By Panasonic

All titles will be displayed at E3 '96

Schoolgirl Madeline is interactive

by Laura Pratt

Storyline: Madeline, the little French schoolgirl who lives in a boarding school in Paris, carries on her adventures with her friends and teacher on-line and on CD-ROM. On-line, children are invited to learn French with Madeline in the Language Club area. In the CD-ROM games, Madeline introduces children to the fun of puppet-making and the geography of Europe, among other things.

Target Audience: 6- to 12-year-old girls (on-line); 5- to 8-year-old girls (CD-ROMs)

Key Activities: Language acquisition and creative exploration

Two years ago, the folks at Creative Wonders, a San Mateo, California-based family, reference and children's CD-ROM publisher, took a hard look at the nature of the successful children's CD-ROM titles on the market. They realized all shared a common trait—they were based on known properties. The Muppets, Winnie the Pooh and various Disney characters had all been snapped up by savvy CD-ROM producers.

"Our efforts," says producer Deborah Cook, "were to try to acquire quality brand content." What's more, she says, they were interested in doing something specifically for girls—the gender usually ignored by developers of computer-related materials.

At the time, Creative Wonders had recently produced a Sesame Street CD-ROM, which was targeted at the youngest faction of the market. The company had also formed an alliance with ABC, which held licenses for educational properties such as *Schoolhouse Rock*. Madeline, whose television target audience sits squarely in the middle of these two and, at the same time, was distributed by ABC and enjoying success there (it still runs on the Family Channel), seemed an obvious choice. After all, this was a classic (sprung from a 1953 book written by Ludwig Bemelmans) that had stood the test of time.

A puzzle from *Madeline's Thinking Games*

Creative Wonders released its first Madeline CD-ROM in August of 1995.

It was for similar reasons that the ABC Multimedia Group chose to launch this petite schoolgirl into the universe of on-line.

ABC had an established site on America Online (AOL) when the network bought DIC Entertainment two years ago. This past winter, the combined talents at the two companies began developing the ABC Kids/DIC site on AOL. In March, the ABC Kidzine site—the first America Online area where children are truly in control—was introduced. Madeline was among its first characters.

Designed as an interactive teaching tool, *Madeline's Language Club* invites kids to learn new words and hear the correct pronunciation with downloadable audio files.

The CDs (*Madeline and the Magnificent Puppet Show* and *Madeline's Thinking Games*, with a third—*Madeline's European Adventure*—on the way this fall) let kids create their own Madeline scenarios and participate in the choices she makes during various adventures. All three programs offer a lot of printable activities, and the chance for players to customize their work.

Each multimedia producer ran into its own particular problems when it came to applying an existing character to a new form of entertainment. For Creative Wonders,

CRITICAL THINKING / AGES 5 & UP
MADELINE
THINKING GAMES
Join Madeline to play dozens of mind-enriching activities that strengthen thinking skills!
CREATIVE WONDERS

the challenge came in maintaining the persona of the characters that were introduced in the television series. "We felt it was very important to be true to the original property," says Cook. They did that by using many of the same actors, colorists and animators who work on the TV show. "We're meticulous in replicating all aspects of Madeline's character," explains Cook, "from her behavior to her voice to the art style."

Meanwhile, Kevin Donahue, the producer of on-line services for ABC Multimedia Group, says his biggest Madeline on-line challenge came with trying to create something that was fresh. "You want to find ways to have fun with the information on-line, rather than just represent it with text and pictures." In other words, he didn't want to get too hung up on the prior existence of Madeline material. He wanted to take advantage of the potential of this new technology.

So far, on-line is still enough of an up-and-comer, in terms of dollar volume, that it doesn't have that much of an influence on the way TV characters are being created. But, points out Donahue, as subscribership grows on venues like America Online, so will on-line programs' clout. "Most entertainment companies getting into on-line now are thinking of the future in terms of their involvement," says Donahue.

And chances are good that more and more players will get involved in this side of the industry, considering the advantages of applying a ready-made character to the world of multimedia, says Cook. For one, the money necessary to inspire awareness of the characters has already been spent. There's the ability to choose established, evergreen properties that are not as risky as new ventures. The back story work of the characters has already been done, and the art work is already in place.

"If you do create it from scratch, of course, you have a lot more freedom to get the exact art you want for the purpose," says Donahue. "We're sort of limited that way." And, as for technical issues, Cook admits they had to be very mindful of the capabilities of the average computer out there, which led to some restrictions. "Because the program itself is so animation rich, that was a concern for us from the beginning."

But technology is advancing all the time, and CD-ROM and on-line product developers both have their eyes on the future. Sound-streaming—the ability to open up an image and hear a sound simultaneously (rather than having to download a sound and play it on a sound player)—is on the very near horizon for Madeline on-line, predicts Donahue. And every new development, he believes, moves the computer's capacities closer to those of the television—with one critical difference: "You can control one and not the other."

Indeed, in both media's experiences, the primary distinction between old and new is the inherent interactivity of the fledgling forms. Says Cook: "You can place children in front of a half-hour television show and they can be entertained in terms of passively watching, but here, Madeline is going to have to react to a child and not just behave within a storyline.

"We had to create different reactions for different situations, and break the fourth wall to make sure Madeline communicates with the player. That's what [multimedia applications] are made to do—engage the player. We want players to explore, click around the screen and enjoy what they're seeing enough to want to do it again."

Animaniacs get new life in a 3-D world

Storyline: Wakko, Yakko and Dot, the crazy characters of the three-year-old *Animaniacs* series, are debuting on CD-ROM at this month's Electronic Entertainment Expo. The IBM-compatible game will hit shelves in early September in up to 40 countries.

Target Audience: The *Animaniacs CD-ROM* can be set for three levels of difficulty based on age: preschoolers to kindergarten students, children in grades one to three, and children in grades four and higher to adults.

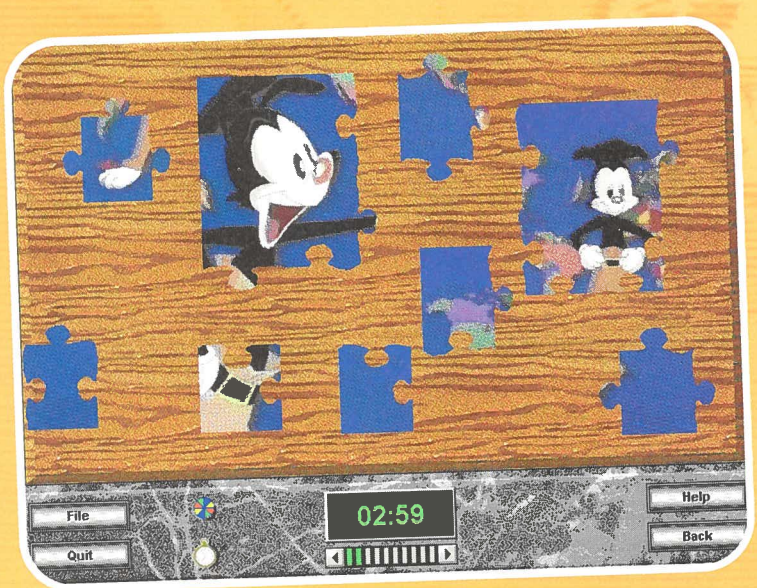
Key Activities: Players travel through a 3-D world of rooms shaped like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. To move to another room, players must spin the Wheel of Morality and complete the chosen task. Each activity is some kind of puzzle. The player wins the game when he or she has explored the whole world.

It was the kid in Jay Alan Samit, president of Van Nuys, California-based Jasmine Multimedia Publishing, that "fell in love" with Wakko, Yakko and Dot and the idea of bringing them to life on a CD-ROM. "There's nothing zanier than these characters," he says. "They're irreverent. They're fresh. They're what kids want to be."

Luckily for Samit, he's not the only one who adores these characters. Since its premiere in the fall of 1993, the show has become one of the hottest series on air. Kids and adults can tune in to this wacky threesome six days a week on the Kids WB Television Network.

Samit's first step in creating the CD-ROM was pitching the idea to Steven Spielberg, inventor of the TV series, two years ago. "He really was excited by it," says Samit. In December of that year, he met with both partners in the animated program—Warner Bros. and Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment—and won the license to the property.

For Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment, the Warner Bros. unit that licenses properties for video game and computer platforms, Jasmine's proposal offered an exciting opportunity to launch the Animaniacs on CD-ROM, says Holly Stein, Burbank, California-based WBIE's vice president of licensing and marketing. WBIE had extended television and movie franchises like *Batman, Black Beauty* and *The Secret Garden* into CD-ROMs. But it had only brought out a line of Animaniacs video games with Konami (America) of Buffalo Grove, Illinois. "With the broad appeal of the show and the personality of the characters, Animaniacs was the perfect property to exploit in this medium," she says.



The challenge that lay ahead for Jasmine was to create a game befitting of its characters and suitable for the *Animaniacs* audience. Kids and adults expect to see the characters look and behave as they do in the show.

Jasmine has tried to achieve this by adapting video clips, music and features like the Wheel of Morality from the show. The CD-ROM includes more than an hour of TV programming. And Samit says incorporating footage is still fairly uncommon for a CD-ROM. "One of the things that has kept other shows from being turned into multimedia has been problems with how to work with the unions" representing writers, directors, musicians, actors and other participants who created the series.

Samit is pleased with the final product. "It really combines the best features of some of the most popular games out there," he says, "but in a non-violent way." The game takes place in a 3-D world. Players collect puzzle pieces and participate in activities, as in other adventure games. And the game is fun and educational at the same time, he says. For example, one of the activities is a jigsaw puzzle with a moving Animaniacs cartoon on the pieces. The video clip features a character singing a list of rote information, such as the names of all the countries in the world. The player must assemble the pieces before the song ends.

Parents will like the educational aspect of the CD-ROM and its potential for reuse. Jasmine has designed the game so that the activities in each room differ, and each time a player starts a new game, the order of the rooms changes from the last game. But Samit predicts that the best part for kids—and adults who love the show—will be interacting with their favorite characters. "They're not passive viewers," he says. "They're active participants."

Using a known character for a CD-ROM is a plus not only for consumers, but for its developers. "The benefit of working with an already established character or brand," says Stein, "is that you've got the brand or character equity in place." And, Samit adds, because the interactive entertainment industry lacks a means of letting customers try a product before they buy it, "one of the best ways to instantly bond with the consumer is to have a character that they recognize."

Still, adapting a known character into a CD-ROM does not guarantee a hit. "It has to be a great title without the character," says Samit. "That character helps you in marketing; it doesn't excuse poor design."

Creating new media products therefore requires a different mindset from producing a TV show. "When you're creating for TV, you are the storyteller. You are engrossing someone in something that has a beginning, a middle and an end. And you are taking along the audience for that ride," says Samit. "When you're creating for an interactive medium, you are creating a situation, but the audience is determining the outcome. So that empowerment is what makes the difference between a successful title and an unsuccessful title."

The creator of a CD-ROM must also recognize the technological limitations of the medium. The game environment does not offer the full range of colors available to TV. And CD-ROMs still lag behind TV in the quality of the video and music.

Once the CD-ROM has been developed, tying in a product using a known character with all of the other licensed goods for the property can give it a boost at retail. Jasmine is currently in discussions with other Animaniacs licensees and with retailers to do custom promotions.

Retailers' demand for known brands will increase the use of properties in interactive entertainment products, says Samit. Retailers prefer licensed products because they understand the "need for customers to have instant recognition when they see that box on the shelf."

More and more, producers of a TV series or a movie are also thinking about interactive entertainment possibilities at the early stages of a program's development. "A lot of shows are being pitched to us before they're on air," says Samit.

As to the future of the Animaniacs in the interactive world, Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment is working with partners on new video games and an edutainment software line. Stein and Samit have no plans for further CD-ROMs, but Samit hopes to introduce more Animaniacs products in the future if the first title is a success. AH

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kidScreen
About reaching children through entertainment software
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Power Rangers get educational

by Ed Kirchdoerffer

Storyline: Children learn to sharpen their math and vocabulary skills, in a fun, arcade game-like setting, with the help of the Power Rangers.

Target Audience: Children age two to 12 years

Key Activities: Math and vocabulary skills development

Even as Saban Interactive readies its first two educational CD-ROMs for release this summer, it is trying to determine now what will be hot two years down the line. However, not only must it judge what series will be popular and transferable to multimedia, it must also make a best guess as to what technology will be the most widely used delivery system in the future.

Saban Interactive, formed in 1994 as a division of Saban Entertainment, released its first five CD-ROM titles, all related to *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers*, last December. This summer, it publishes *Power Rangers ZEO PowerActive Words* and *Power Rangers ZEO PowerActive Math*, educational titles designed to improve children's math and vocabulary skills while they have fun with their favorite superheroes. The TV series *Power Rangers ZEO* debuted in April.

"We decided very specifically that if we entered the [CD-ROM] marketplace, we would concentrate on Power Rangers," says J. David Koch, vice president, Saban Interactive.

"It's obviously our jewel in the crown."

Koch says the reasoning behind the decision to produce Power Rangers products exclusively, as opposed to other Saban properties, was to establish the Saban brand in the multimedia marketplace. As it gains a reputation for producing a good product at a fair price, Saban will launch brand extensions of its other properties.

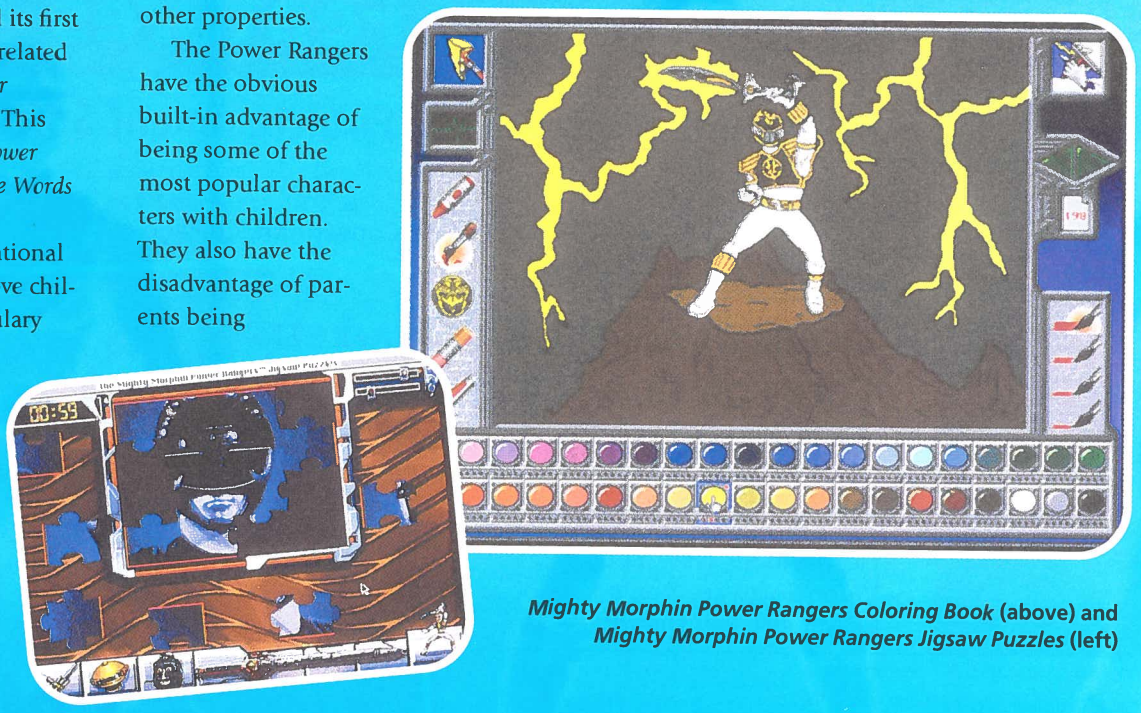
The Power Rangers have the obvious built-in advantage of being some of the most popular characters with children. They also have the disadvantage of parents being somewhat skeptical about whether such an entertainment-driven vehicle can pack an educational punch. The challenge for Saban comes in proving that these products are fun for kids while reassuring parents that they are also solid educational tools.

"If you don't walk that line correctly, you'll wind up not appealing to either audience," says Koch.

Even with such a high-profile property as Power Rangers, Saban cannot rest on the laurels of the show to sell the CD-ROM. Koch explains that many studios err in believing that a big-name license on a computer disk will guarantee big sales. Saban's position is to treat Power Rangers as if it were an unknown entity so as to determine if the game or activity stands well enough on its own.

"If you don't start from that direction, I think the tendency is to spend a lot on the license and the marketing of it, without making sure that the product itself takes advantage of the technology," he adds.

That said, it's still easier to work with an established



***Mighty Morphin Power Rangers Coloring Book* (above) and *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers Jigsaw Puzzles* (left)**

product, not just for brand recognition, but also in terms of the economics of game production. Saban has four seasons of *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* shows and a theatrical movie from which to take material in terms of visual imagery.

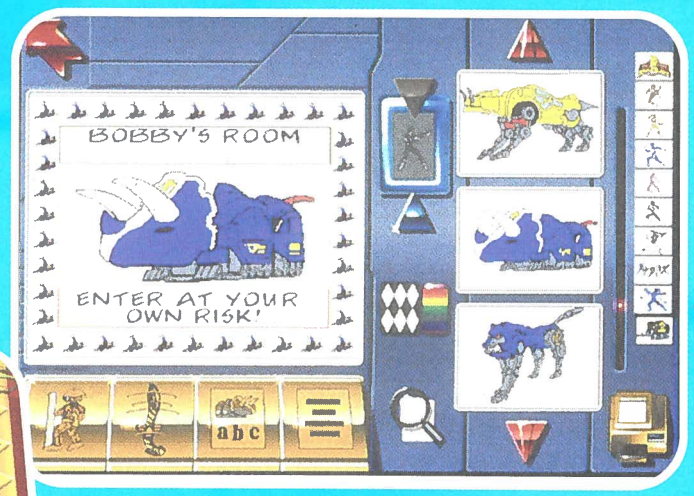
Saban's interactive division works hand-in-hand with the company's production department to evaluate the multimedia possibilities of future product. Much like guessing what show is going to be a hit, the process is not scientific. Koch cites *Toy Story* as an example.

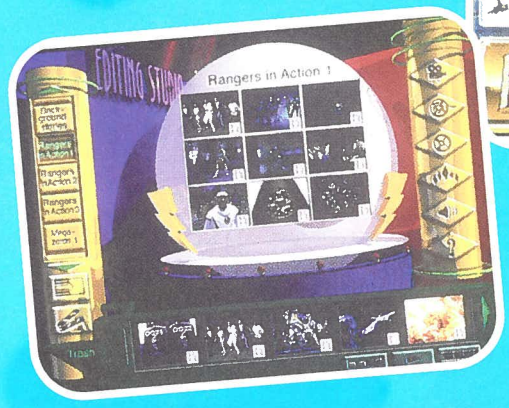
He says that if Disney had been able to predict two years ago that the movie was going to be the blockbuster it was, the studio could have been in a position to release more film-related CD-ROM products than the two that are currently on the market.

Characters from TV, movies and comic books are naturals for line expansion into multimedia. Koch can envision the day when multimedia is no longer "new media" and the origin of the program content won't matter. Already, Saban is preparing an animated series for UPN based on the very popular "Bad Dog" screensaver.

"Whether something starts as software or a comic book or whatever and gates out to the rest of the technology areas, or whether it starts out as an animated show and makes its way into software, eventually, there's going to be less and less of a tendency to worry about where a good piece comes from, and more, how many ways can you amortize it," he says.

***Mighty Morphin Power Rangers Print Kit* (right), *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers : Create-A-Movie* (below) and *Power Rangers ZEO PowerActive Math* (below right)**





The other major challenge facing multimedia companies is determining what technology is going to be the proper platform a few years down the road. Koch says that some of the questions Saban needs to answer include: Is the industry taking off in the direction of CD-ROMs, more sophisticated on-line services or a hybrid of the two? Is the major delivery platform going to be a Pentium chip or Windows 95 or something completely new? What are the implications of more sophisticated interactivity among users?

"You have to ride the leading edge of technology without falling off your board," he says.

It's an odd and strange game, filled with many pitfalls, and it's something that most companies have not had to deal with before. Koch says that in television production, the tools are firmly established. If something goes wrong, you don't have to invent a new camera. In multimedia, you might have to create new tools or technology to solve your problems.

"There isn't a de facto standard, like a VCR standard, where you know that if you make a VHS tape, it's going to work," Koch says. "We have to figure out how we are going to support the largest amount of customers while causing less consternation for that small percentage that we're not compatible with."

Saban will expand into its other properties beginning with this holiday season. It will release a CD-ROM in conjunction with *Masked Rider* for Christmas. It hopes to distribute an art studio game featuring many Saban characters in early 1997. and it's currently negotiating with fast food, packaged goods and other companies, seeking promotional partners for its CD-ROM products.

Discovery extends its brands

Storyline: Iris, The Happy Professor, the wacky bird puppet created by Desclez Productions of Montreal, brings preschoolers into the classroom with song and dance. On the CD-ROM, Professor Iris and friends introduce children to the ocean and the jungle in fun-filled adventures that build their vocabulary, language and reading skills.

Target Audience: Preschoolers

Key Activities: Creative exploration

Since 1994, Discovery Channel Multimedia, a unit of Discovery Communications, has produced CD-ROMs that serve as brand extensions to complement existing series and specials airing on both Discovery Channel and The Learning Channel, as well as completely original product not supporting broadcast series.

While most of the regular "characters" that appear on these channels are sharks, whales or other of nature's creatures and wonders, one of the first CD-ROMs under the company's new division was based on TLC's popular animated preschool character Professor Iris. Two CD-ROMs under the umbrella title of *Professor Iris' Fun Field Trip* have been published. The first, *Animal Safari*, was released in 1994. *Seaside Adventure* came out last year. The Professor Iris CD-ROMs were made in conjunction with Mountain View, California-based software maker T/Maker and Montreal's Desclez Productions, the series' producer.

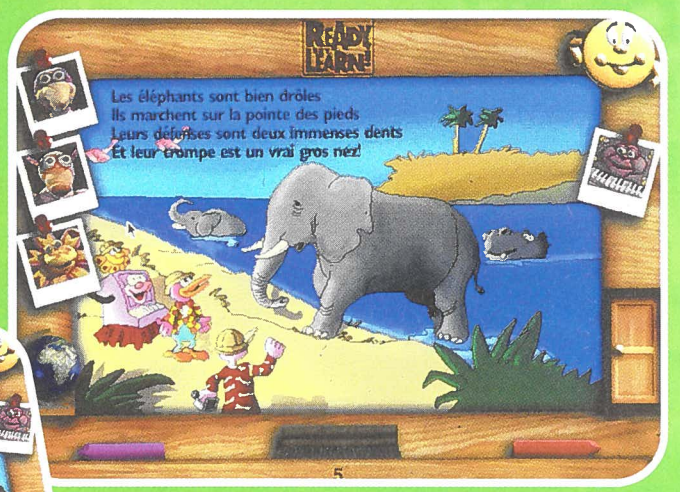
A cornerstone to The Learning Channel's Ready! Set! Learn! block of commercial-free weekday morning programming, the popular Professor Iris seemed to be the most natural character to spin off into a CD-ROM.

"We thought that if we want to venture into the preschool market, Professor Iris, which restores the role of teacher in the classroom as a good role model for kids, [would be ideal]," says Margaret Buckley, executive producer, Discovery Channel Multimedia. "There are a lot of kids who really like Iris and who think Iris and his adventures are fun. We thought it was a good idea to build brand and character recognition by creating an auxiliary product."

Buckley, who comes from a television production background, quickly learned that multimedia presents challenges, traps and difficulties that she had never encountered in broadcast. Foremost were the constant new waves of technology that could render products a generation behind before they even came out on the market. Trying to publish a product that is most up-to-date with the software and hardware currently available becomes a never-ending catch-22.

"It's such a different beast," says Buckley. "As soon as you publish something, somebody's come out with a tool that could have made what you have already published slightly better."

Repeat usage is another major difference between TV and multimedia that proves a constant challenge for Buckley. In TV, her job was to get the viewer to watch the show once, but in multimedia, the riddle she must solve is


READY LEARN!
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Various images from *Professor Iris' Fun Field Trip - Animal Safari*

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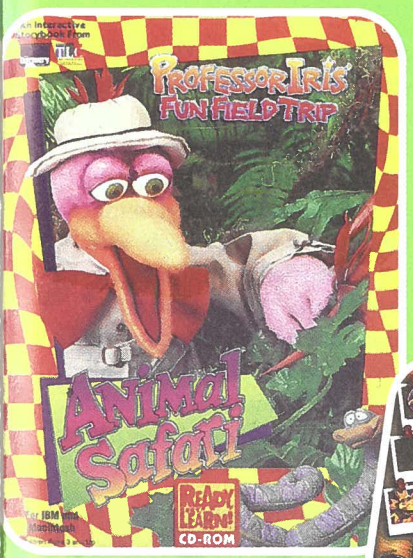
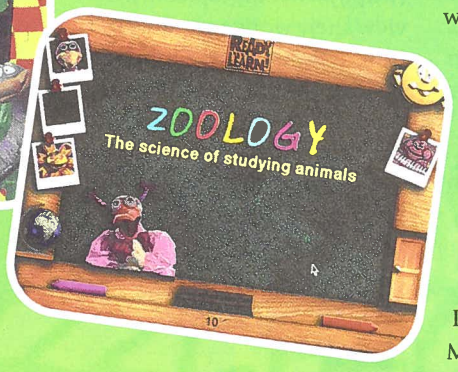




how to make the game fascinating enough so that kids will want to come back to it time and time again. This is a vital question to answer, especially in the kids market. Products have to be designed for two purchasers: the child and the parent who pays for them. The games have to be made so children will want to keep playing them. If they don't, the parents won't think they've made a good purchase and may be hesitant to buy future products featuring that character.

In the case of Professor Iris, Buckley strived to make the software mirror the show as much as possible, so the children using the CD-ROMs would make the connection that the elements in the series were the same elements on the software. An example is the Professor's school bell. On the series, when the bell rings, the show is over. On the CD-ROM, the on-screen bell acts as the quit button. "We tried to shoehorn things from the show into the CD-ROM," says Buckley. "We didn't monkey with the original characters. We didn't want to introduce any new ones. We didn't want to break what works. However, some things didn't translate. We had to run them by kids to see what worked and what didn't."

While Buckley said that it's much easier to devise games based on already established characters because of the obvious built-in recognition factor, trying to create a character from the ground up specifically for a CD-ROM has benefits too. She said that children like the idea of an on-screen host who acts as a friend walking them through. However, trying to build a whole marketplace around that character (devising a TV show from it) is difficult, but not impossible, as the success of *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?* has proven.

The company is mulling over trying to accomplish such a feat with characters it introduced in its *Big Job* CD-ROM. *Big Job*, released last fall, is an activity-based product in which kids pick a type of truck, drive into the Big Job Clubhouse, and build things. It features two on-screen hosts who guide kids through the product and is skewed to a slightly older audience.

In the meantime, Discovery Channel Multimedia has no current plans to produce further Professor Iris games. In fact, it has determined that the three- to six-year-old market has grown too crowded, so it has shifted focus to the eight- to 12-year-old market.

Most of Discovery's CD-ROM releases have been in support of popular series such as *Iris, The Happy Professor, Wings* and *In the Company of Whales*. However, it is aggressively marketing games, such as *Big Job*, that stand on their own. *SkyTrip America*, which was released on May 1, looks at U.S. history from a multicultural perspective. In August, it debuts *Invention Studio*, in which kids can build creations and test them out to see if they work or not.

Buckley feels that after several years of learning the business, Discovery Channel Multimedia is right on target with its audience. "We've got a great focus for kids and a great focus across the board for our hobbyist line, our exploration line and our entertainment lines. We've got the backing and the reputation of the Discovery Channel, which is an advantage—and disadvantage—because we have to live up to those standards. It's not always so easy, but it makes our job very rewarding, because when we do come out with a product, it's pretty good." EK

Big Top puts 'toons' on the Internet

Storyline: Children can watch cartoons starring Felix the Cat or The Simpsons on their computers by using the *netTOONS*™ CD-ROM and *Big Top Internet TV*. They can also share the cartoons that they have created using using *Big Top's Cartoon Toolbox Starring Felix the Cat* or *Simpsons Cartoon Studio*.

Target Audience: Children five and up

Key Activities: Viewing, creating and exchanging moving cartoons

For all of its hype, the Internet still has a lot to prove. First-time users and non-techies expecting to discover a brave new world of wonder and information often find an unfriendly, slow and sometimes frustrating experience.

San Francisco-based Big Top Productions has developed software that may help change some of that.

At E3, it is unveiling *netTOONS* and *Big Top Internet TV*, which will allow users to watch cartoons on the Internet in real time. What's more, for users of *Big Top's Cartoon Toolbox Starring Felix the Cat* or *Simpsons Cartoon Studio*, *Internet TV* will showcase cartoons these same users have created and will allow them to download cartoons developed by others.

While *netTOONS* and *Internet TV* will not be available until this summer, children and adults have been able to create their own Felix cartoons since last April. And in June, Fox Interactive will be bringing out *Simpsons Cartoon Studio*, developed by Big Top.

Both CD-ROMs contain all of the tools necessary to create Saturday morning TV-quality cartoons, including backgrounds, props, sound effects, soundtracks and the ability to loop and edit. But to date, cartoon creators have only been able to share their cartoons with their family and friends. *netTOONS* and *Internet TV* will change all of that.

Users will submit their cartoons to *Internet TV* by uploading their sketches onto Big Top's Web site (http://www.bigtop.com). To view their work and other submissions, they will open *Internet TV* by first connecting to the Internet via an Internet service provider, then clicking on the *netTOONS* icon on their screen. *Internet TV* will send instructions that activate the characters, backgrounds and other elements on the *netTOONS* CD-ROM to produce a moving image.

"It's a novel approach to solving the bandwidth limitations of the Internet," says Jim Myrick, executive vice president and company co-founder.

Internet TV is designed to look much like a conventional TV set. Users will be able to tune in to one of two "channels," either *Felix the Cat* or *The Simpsons*, showing cartoons in real time.

"Everything else on the Internet isn't in real time. Click on a button and absolutely nothing will happen until all of that information gets to your house. You're

***Big Top's Cartoon Toolbox Starring Felix the Cat* (top right), a page from Big Top's demo reel (above) and *Hello Kitty Big Fun Deluxe*, another children's CD-ROM developed by Big Top (right)**

never really sitting back and watching television on the Internet. You're clicking, you're waiting, you're going to dinner, you're coming back.

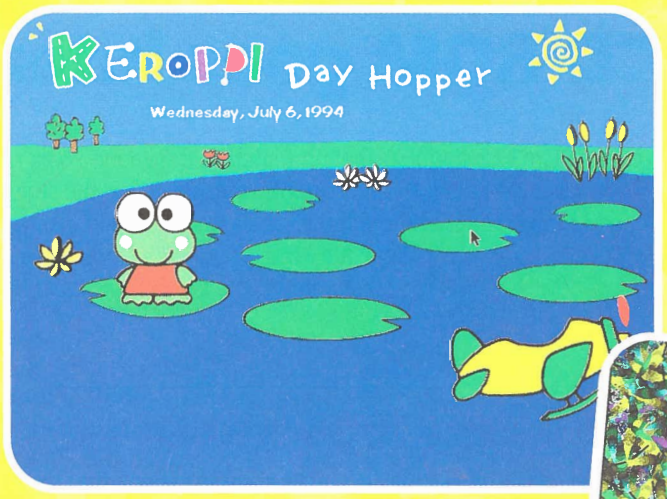
"The fundamental novelty of our product is that you have the scenery and characters already at your house. I have a very efficient way to talk to you over the regular telephone. You don't have to buy any special equipment. You don't have to upgrade. You can stop the movie; you can pause it. You can look at multiple channels," says Myrick.

With *netTOONS*, users will only be able to watch the cartoons. If they want to become more actively involved, for a fee, they can unlock the built-in *Cartoon Toolbox* software on the CD-ROM by calling an 800 number on the CD-ROM to obtain an encryption code.

Of the people touched by any sort of media today, about 99 percent of them are consumers, says Myrick, with just one percent involved in the creation. "We're asking the consumer to become more participatory in the process and also become content creators themselves."

The implications of Big Top's initiative are far-reaching. Grafting commercials into *Internet TV* is possible, and at its launch, it will include ads that run between cartoons. Users will be able to connect to an advertiser's home page on the Internet simply by clicking on the ad while it's playing. "This may be the only game in town to watch real commercials and real cartoons on the Internet for the next three to five years," says Myrick.

Myrick's next step is to convince advertisers that this new technology will make the Internet a compelling advertising medium.



Other Big Top CD-ROMs: *Keroppi Day Hopper* (left), and *The Groove Thing* (bottom)

"Right now [on the Internet], you have a slide show that's slow, with a lot of text and someone's logo at the bottom," he says. "That may or may not be an effective vehicle for advertising. Next to it, on a terminal with Big Top software running, are regular color cartoons and commercials. The difference is staggering."

Big Top has been showcasing the software to over a dozen of the top advertising agencies, making believers out of both the techno-literate and techno-phobe. Myrick says that many people are equating this new technology to the early days of television, and that real time animation and live action on the Internet will change how we think about media and telecommunications.

Big Top is looking towards an old-style TV method—channel sponsorship—to entice advertisers to pay for programming so less cost is passed on to consumers.

"We think that's the critical component that's been missing for CD-ROMs," he says, adding that many consumers neglect to realize that advertisers have made conventional television "free" to viewers.

netTOONS and *Big Top Internet TV* are not just going to be aimed at children. The company is looking into other properties and has just signed a contract with Fox and Marvel Comics to develop five channels for several of Marvel's licensed properties, including *The Incredible Hulk*.

Big Top and Fox are even looking into the idea of simulcasting an episode of *The Simpsons*, which Fox would produce for TV and Big Top would duplicate to air on *Internet TV*. Additionally, Big Top hopes to make available "public access" channels, so artists and other creative types can submit their work and collaborate with other artists from around the world. Myrick calls it "The World Wide Stage."

Myrick sees his company's focus in the future as being that of a studio or an ad agency, developing more sophisticated software and making digital entertainment commercials. Big Top hopes to be up and running with up to 30 channels within the next year.

"On the Internet, every 24 hours is like a month," says Myrick. "These cookies are just out of the oven, and Fox has already agreed to put the product (*netTOONS*) on every single CD-ROM they sell, making it free for the consumer, and to put it on the Internet."

Despite all of the positive buzz the company has been receiving, Myrick is keeping his feet firmly planted on the ground. "Right now, we're the only game in town where you can watch cartoons on the Internet. [But] it's a tough business. A lot of it is out in front of us. I'll be glad if I'm still here next year." EK

Blinky Bill CD-ROM goes international

Storyline: The *Blinky Bill* feature film was the first creation featuring the young koala named Blinky Bill. Like the movie, the animated TV series, *The Adventures of Blinky Bill*, is the story of the experiences of Blinky Bill and his friends, including another koala, a mouse and a kangaroo. The first Blinky Bill CD-ROM will kick off in Australia in late June. *Blinky Bill's Ghost Cave* is based on an episode of the show, and will be available for Windows 3.1, Windows 95 and Macintosh.

Target Audience: Children three to nine

Key Activities: The main activity on the CD-ROM is a 12-page storybook that shows the text and the characters acting out the story. Wombo, the wise old wombat in the TV show, is the narrator throughout the CD-ROM. Children can choose to have the story read to them, or to interact with the characters and objects on the screen. The CD-ROM also features a comprehension quiz on the characters and events in the story, puzzles that test skills such as co-ordination and math, and a slide show of animals native to Australia.

While some developers might have shied away from the film and television property, InterVision Multimedia and Yoram Gross Film Studios saw that the distinctly Australian identity of Blinky Bill and his gang could work in their favor. A CD-ROM would require international sales because Australia's population alone would not be large enough to support the product. The show had already won international audiences in countries including England, Germany and the U.S., which would make it easier to introduce a CD-ROM abroad.

With the CD-ROM set to launch this summer, Simon Leadley, technical director of Forest Interactive, a joint company of InterVision Multimedia and Yoram Gross Film Studios, is confident that the CD-ROM's Australian identity will set it apart from other products on the shelves. And, "in such a competitive area, you want every advantage that you possibly can get."

The idea of producing a Blinky Bill CD-ROM came from InterVision, a CD-ROM developer. With a short demo of the product on hand, InterVision approached the creator of the film and television show, Yoram Gross Film Studios, 11 months ago. "(Yoram Gross) got very excited about the whole idea of doing something in a completely new medium," says Leadley. The two Sydney-based companies formed Forest Interactive a month and a half later to develop the CD-ROM. Roadshow Entertainment, also of Sydney, signed on as the distributor, and has already pre-sold the CD-ROM in nine countries other than Australia.

To get the best results, Forest Interactive treated the CD-ROM like "a completely separate project" from the TV show, says Leadley. While the joint company had hoped to adapt some of the existing animation, the process would have been too time-consuming. "It's often best and more practical from a cost-efficiency and also an artistic point of view to produce it yourself rather than trying to adapt something to fit in a medium that wasn't necessarily designed for it."

The reason for the lack of useable footage was that the CD-ROM contains long shots, compared to the short scenes and close-up shots typically appearing in the TV show. Using long shots imposes constraints on the size of the characters and objects on the screen, but this doesn't reduce the quality of the product, says Leadley. Quite the opposite, the medi-

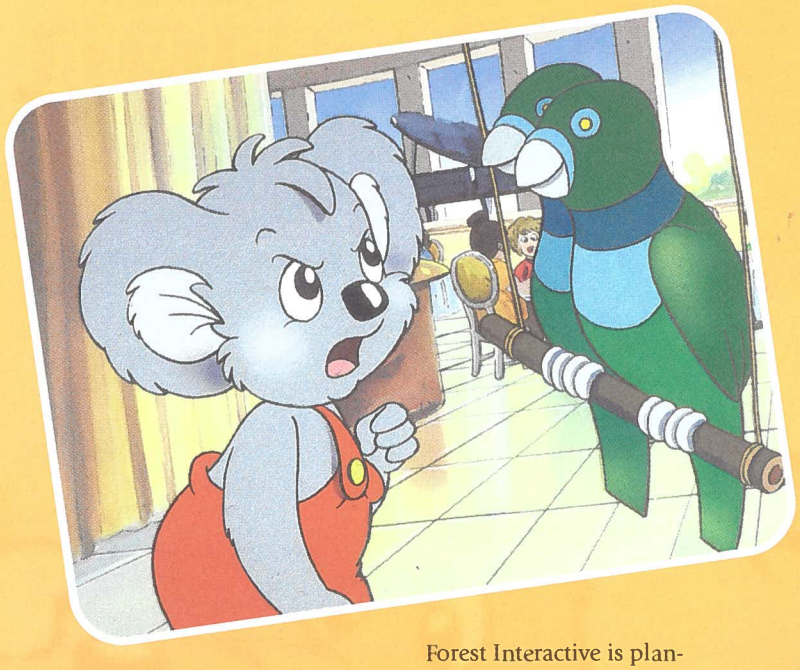
um gives developers "a much bigger stage to play with," and offers consumers a "totally different way" of observing the characters and the action versus the TV show.

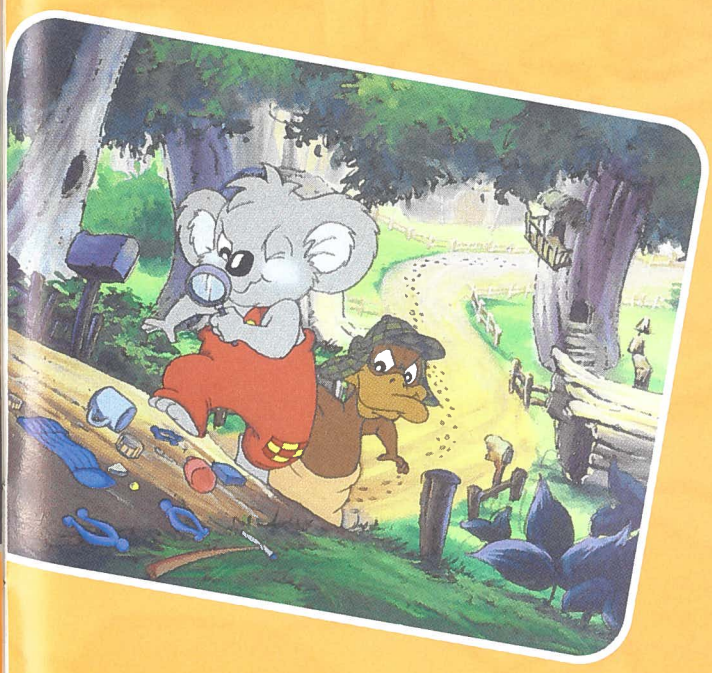
The CD-ROM "still looks as rich as it does on television," says Leadley, although he admits that CD-ROM technology is not yet on a par with that of a TV show. For example, CD-ROMs can be slow in delivering information to the computer.

"We made a very conscious decision to make it as similar to the show as possible," says Leadley. Since some of the animators of the CD-ROM had worked on the Blinky Bill film and TV series, the product is consistent with its predecessors in style, color and other design elements. As well, the theme song and character voices are the same.

"To us, it was very important not only to have the technical expertise to be able to produce (a CD-ROM)," says Leadley, "but (to have) something that already had some sort of exposure to begin with." The use of a known character on the CD-ROM helps parents who are inundated with titles make a choice because they know what the characters do and what quality to expect from the product.

Children too feel an immediate affinity with characters that they are familiar with, and established characters could therefore be applied in many ways. For example, says Leadley, known characters like Blinky Bill and his friends could be used in school materials to make "learning a much more enjoyable experience."





Kids are not only responsive to known characters, but also "seem to be really well versed in computers," says Leadley. When testing the CD-ROM, Forest Interactive also found that kids usually go to the puzzles first, then on to the story. They like both change and repetition of events. And what they especially enjoy is the surprises, like a helicopter soaring by, when they click on objects on the screen. "It's so incongruous with the whole thing that they love it to death. They think it's totally amusing and silly. It's almost kind of like a Monty Python flick."

Forest Interactive is thrilled that *Blinky Bill's Ghost Cave* is completed on time and on budget. That's an accomplishment in this young industry because developers don't have many guidelines to determine how much time and money developing a product will require.

Forest Interactive is planning to bring out a second Blinky Bill title, and is also looking at efforts in the areas of 3-D and 2-D animation. The company would also like to develop and launch television series and CD-ROMs hand-in-hand, which other companies are starting to do.

And Leadley predicts that the job of CD-ROM developers will be easier in the future. That's because he anticipates that material now available on CD-ROMs will eventually reach consumers' homes on-line. As well as making delivery easier than distributing a product through hundreds of retail outlets, on-line distribution would eliminate the need to customize products for different types of computers. AH

Animation Expo added to Cardiff

by Janine Gibson

It's glamorous, exciting, star-studded and a festival. Oozing world premieres and expected to boast its highest attendance figures ever, the biannual International Animation Festival opens on May 27 and runs until June 1.

But, it's not in Cannes, Las Vegas or L.A. It's in rainy old Cardiff, Wales.

It started in 1965 in Cambridge as an initiative devised by academics in the animation business (including star animator Bob Godfrey, who will be there this year). In 1989, it moved to animation center Bristol before a further short hop up the road took the event to Cardiff in 1992.

"It's to do with venue size," says festival director Fran Barlow, who takes up the role for the first time this year. "They were turning people away in Bristol, because the festival was so popular and we needed bigger screening venues."

Barlow's background is in events and marketing, rather than animation, and her arrival has signified a change in structure for the organization of this year's event. Three years at Granada Television in international marketing and three years at the MIDEM organization have given her the administrative expertise to pull in the sponsorship and funding necessary to stage the event.

The animation festival is run as a charitable non-profit organization and fundraising activities (such as sponsorship, and Barlow's innovation, an Animation Expo) are aimed at covering the costs of staging the event.

"We need the support of the industry to continue," she says. "Getting sponsorship is always tough, but the Expo seems to have been a great success. In '94, we had a few software companies present, but my background is in expos and I felt we had a need for a bigger space. We've filled the Cardiff International Arena with companies like Avid Parallax and Cambridge Animation systems."

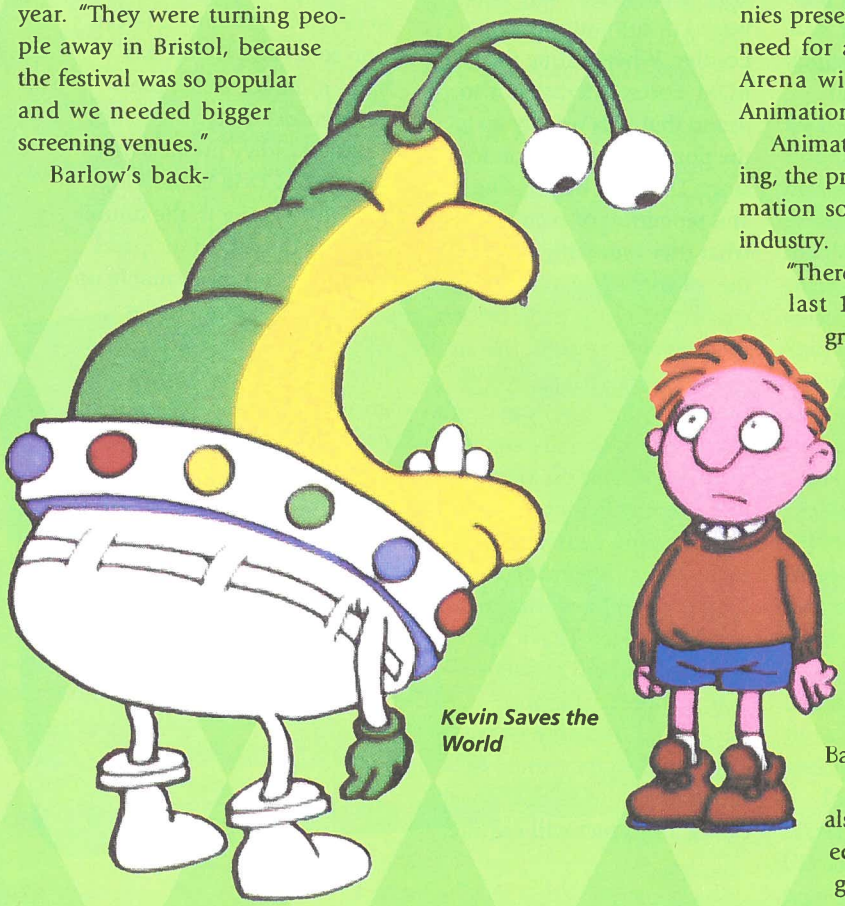
Animation Expo also features Disney exhibiting merchandising, the prospect of Internet surfing and Softimage computer animation software. It reflects the changing face of the animation industry.

"There has been a phenomenal growth in animation over the last 10 years," explains Barlow, "and there is now a far greater focus on technology."

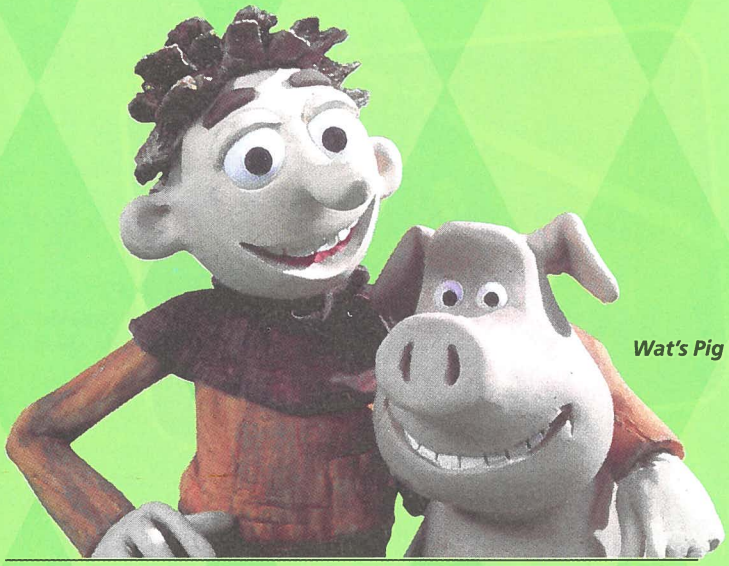
Tackling the thorny issue of computers versus cels head-on, she says she believes that technological expertise isn't taking over, "but it does play a role—a good role—so we've got to say, 'this is what's available and it's a help, not a hindrance.'"

A self-confessed animation novice ("although I've learnt a lot in the last year"), Barlow hired four specialist programming heads to schedule the festival's primary areas of interest: international animation, British animation, technology and children's programming. Although there is a realization in the industry that animation isn't just for children, says Barlow, the bulk is still directed at a young audience.

The festival attracted not only 1,200 delegates, but also 9,000 members of the public in 1994, and is expected to top that number this year with up to 2,000 delegates and 12,000 members of the public, with large



Kevin Saves the World



Wat's Pig

showings expected from the Americans, Europeans and Australians.

To keep the numbers up, Barlow is keen to present plenty of public screenings and events alongside the seminars and presentations for the delegates.

Special public exhibitions include one by British producer Cosgrove Hall Films, the talent behind *Danger Mouse, Noddy, Count Duckula* and *Oakie Doke,* to celebrate the firm's twentieth birthday. Featuring original models and sets, the show will also include a specially commissioned film in which the public will meet all the creators and producers at Cosgrove Hall and be introduced to Fantomcat, its new feline star.

Cosgrove Hall will be joined in the Expo by a Beatrix Potter exhibition, which will include cels and photos from the series, and the slightly less-classic Spitting Image team, who specialize in irreverent and satirical animation, and their eponymous puppet show.

"Kids R Us—a Children's Day" will feature specifically targeted sessions for children's programs. International highlights for kids include screenings of restored versions of early animations *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and *Fantasia,* master classes on the new *Toy Story,* and a sneak preview of Disney's latest feature *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* with a technology expert on hand to explain what went into the making of the film.

Also from the U.S., Klasky Csupo children's programming will include original footage of early *Simpsons, Rugrats, Aahhh!! Real Monsters, Santo Bugito* and *Duckman.* Arlene Klasky and Gabor Csupo built one of the most successful animation companies in the world from a spare bedroom and will present four British premieres and one world premiere (Igor Kovalyov's *Bird on a Window*).

And to celebrate the Centenary of Cinema, an international jury consisting of Giannalberto Bendazzi (Italy), John Canemaker (U.S.), Clare Kitson (U.K.), Joachim Kreck (Germany) and Michel Ocelot (France) has selected a program of all-time animation favorites, including *The Wrong Brothers* and *Duck Amuck.*

No festival is complete without a retrospective (or two), and Cardiff is no exception. Europe's answer to Tex Avery, Guido Manuli, is honored with screenings of his dark, short films and an extract from his 1990 feature *Volere Volare.*

Pilot Studio and Second Frog, two Russian animation studios, are the top, and the first privately owned, production companies in the country. They will present a look at their work since starting up in 1988.

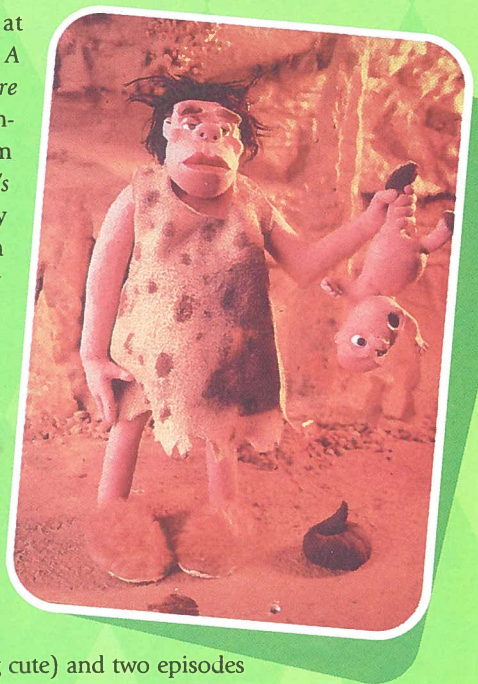
Two In Memoriam stands will look at the work of Warner Bros.' animator Friz Freleng (the man behind the *Pink Panther* title sequence) and British animator John Halas.

Respect is also being paid to MTV's long-standing commitment to innovative animation and to commissioning new talent to produce its famed stings and idents. A session will feature a diverse assortment of the music channel's recent short films and stings, as well as acknowledging its important role in breeding newcomers to the industry.

An international first comes with Henry Selick (*The Nightmare Before Christmas*), who will present a one-off European preview of his feature film adaptation of Roald Dahl's classic children's story *James and The Giant Peach* as the opening film. Selick was a guest of the last festival in '94 at the premiere of *The Nightmare Before Christmas.* (The organizers are particularly pleased with this coup as Roald Dahl was born in Cardiff, and maintained close roots there.)

British children's animation is represented by the omnipresent, multi-Oscar winning Aardman Animation, also celebrating its 20th birthday this year.

Goggs



Wallace and Gromit creator Nick Park will be at the festival and screening *A Close Shave* and *Creature Comforts* (both Oscar winners), but also from Aardman is the new *Wat's Pig,* aimed at a slightly older audience and a world premiere of new series *Rex the Runt.*

Kids screenings for the public will be introduced by the director of *The Forgotten Toys,* Graham Ralph. A mix of animation for kids will include Ann Vrombaut's *When I Grow Up I Want To Be A Tiger!* (about a kitten who is fed up with being cute) and two episodes of *Kevin,* from another Oscar winner, Bob Godfrey.

Not forgetting the increasing popularity of adult animation, the programmers are making the point with "Animated Erotica," described by the festival as "a program of sex, seduction and sinful cels." Films screened (emphatically not in front of the children) will include Tex Avery's *Red Hot Riding Hood,* Antoinette Starkiewicz's *Pussy Pumps Up,* Wayne Traudt's *Penis*

continued on page 40

continued from page 39

Envy and a *9 1/2 Weeks* spoof, *Nine Seconds and a Half* by Vincenzo Gionola. Strictly behind closed doors, of course.

The New Film and Best of World Animation program includes new work from all over the globe, including U.K. premieres for *Quest* (Germany), *L'Alliance* (France), *Joy Street* (U.S.), Oscar-nominated *Chicken from Outer Space* (U.S.), *The End of the World in Four Seasons* (Canada) and Gary Larson's *Tales from the Far Side* (also from Canada).

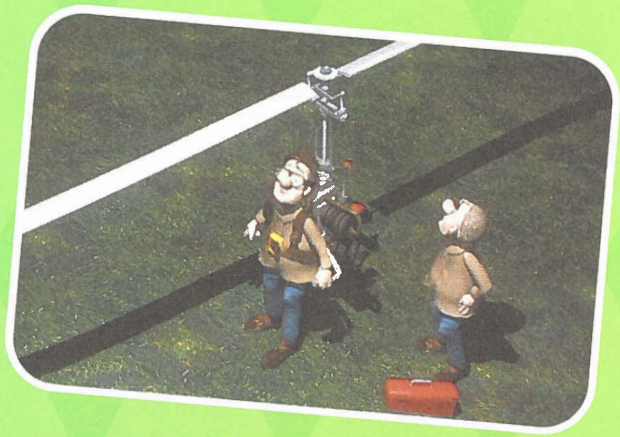
"I think it's a good balance between British and international animation," Barlow says proudly. "The festival has two functions: to showcase British animation, but also to educate people in international animation. We've always had an educational philosophy."

The National Film and Television School has trained a whole generation of award-winning animation directors such as Nick Park, Alison Snowden and David Fine, and will present a session called "Plasticine, Pencils or People," looking at the interaction between live action and animation film-making. It will include the work of up-and-coming students, and all the animators will take questions after screenings.

Animate!—a British scheme, co-financed by Channel 4 and The Arts Council, that funds animators to realize experimental and non-commercial projects—will present the new ideas, and talk about risks and the films that have resulted. Recently completed films *Juke Box, 15th February* and *Scrutiny* will be screened.

Turning to commercials "30 Second Epic" features two of the U.K.'s most respected animation directors, Jerry Hibbert and Graham Ralph, looking back at over 13 years of commercials produced at their award-winning studio, Hibbert Ralph Animation.

And "End of an Era" takes a look at John Coates and his studio TVC—one of the most popular and successful U.K. animation studios, which is to close in 1997. This program will look back over 30 years of TVC productions, such as its world-renowned collaborations with Raymond Briggs on *The Snowman* and *When the Wind Blows*. A question-and-answer session after the screenings will feature a panel including Briggs, author of the animated books on which the films are based.



The Wrong Brothers

Other TVC highlights include The Beatles' classic animated feature *Yellow Submarine* and a recent adaptation of *The Wind in the Willows.*

Technological advice comes from keynote speaker Scott Ross, CEO of leading Hollywood digital special effects company Digital Domain, and formerly of ILM.

Disney's Ed Ghertner will talk about the firm's computerized animation system and its impact on the ubiquitous Disney features. Newcomer to the fray DreamWorks SKG is sending Dylan Kohler to talk about how he built the Digital Animation DreamMachine, and David Fine gives an animator's view of the system, used to develop *Bob's Birthday* from Oscar-winning short to series.

New media for animation is a development area and two sessions examine the options for where the product can go. "Animating the Net" looks at the technologies getting it moving and shows how distributors are using it as a showcase, with speakers from Apple and Animation World Network.

"Multimedia for Animators" is a primer on multimedia and computer games, emphasizing what producers need from animators and what they, in turn, have to offer.

A celebration of Welsh animation is particularly appropriate in Cardiff. Two programs will reveal the diverse range of talented animators based in Wales: one in Welsh and one in English including Michael Mort and Deiniol Morris' popular *Goggs*.

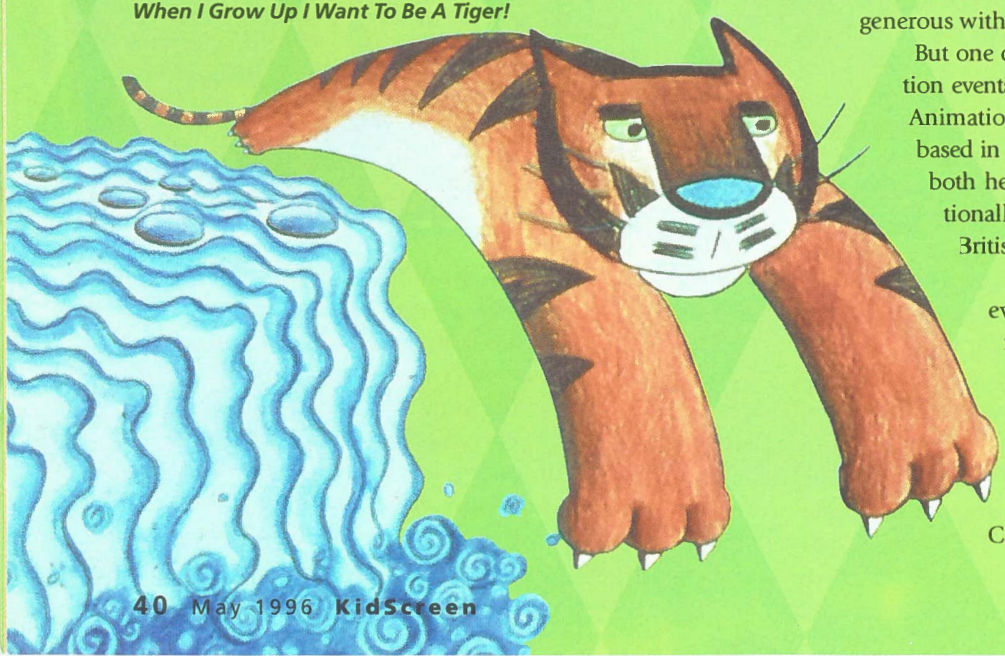
"It's good to be in Cardiff, because it is such a center of animation in the U.K.," says Barlow. And, the local council has been generous with sponsorship.

But one of the aims of the festival is to join with other animation events. Barlow is particularly keen to work with the British Animation Awards, which relaunched in '95 and is currently based in London, to present a more united front for animators both here and abroad. Although the Cardiff festival is traditionally non-competitive, there will be a screening of the '95 British Animation Award winners on the closing night.

"There may be a possibility of combining the events," says Barlow. "I will be speaking to the organizers of the BAA to discuss it, although nothing has been talked about yet. I wanted to show the winners, because the international visitors won't have seen the awards.

"It would be nice to have one huge week in everyone's diary," she adds, "to say come to Cardiff and get animated!" ◆

When I Grow Up I Want To Be A Tiger!



Big Blue Dot:
"Students in kid culture"

by Theresa Dillon

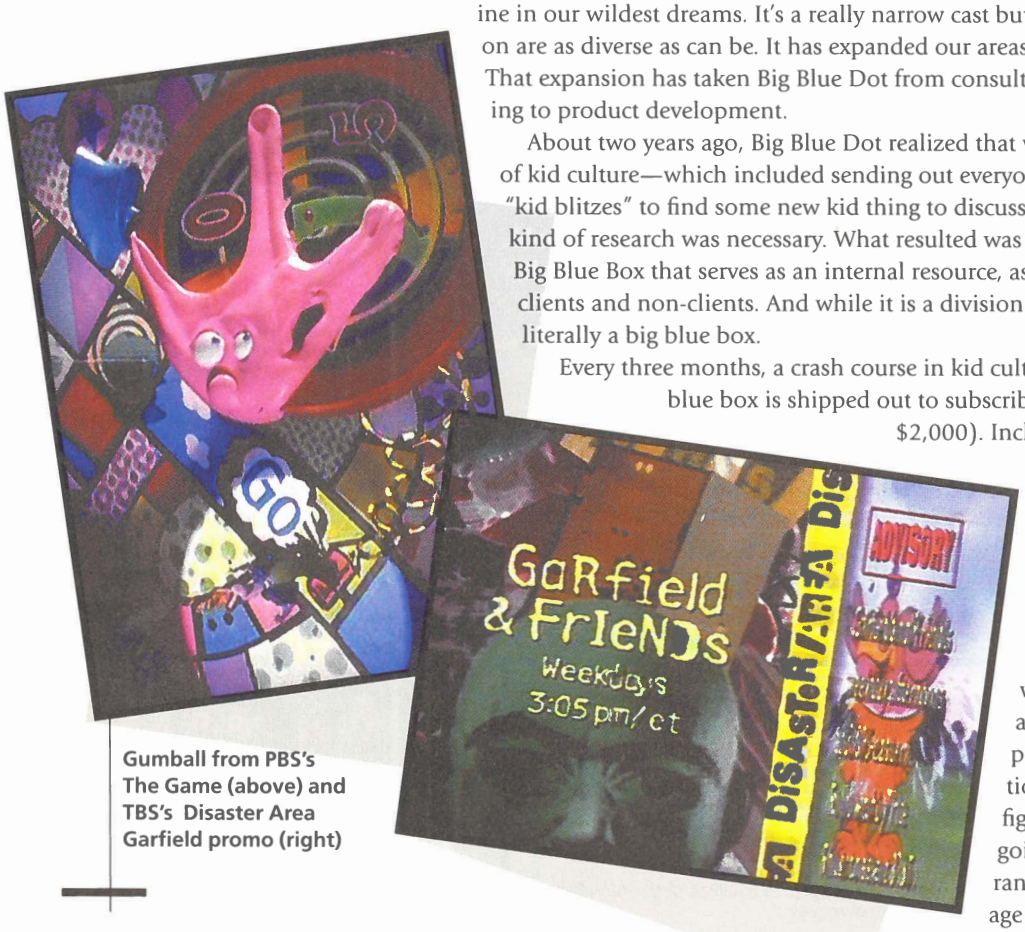
Their work is everywhere. It would be impossible to be in this industry and not see it, and yet, Big Blue Dot has been in existence for only four years. In that short time, this Watertown, Massachusetts, print and broadcast design studio has managed to make quite a noticeable mark on the kid scene. To date, they are responsible (along with several partner studios) for a variety of logos for Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network, Hanna-Barbera and YTV; the concept and design of identities for PBS's and TBS's kids programming blocks, complete with animated interstitials: The Game for PBS and Disaster Area for TBS; and a number of campaigns for toy companies and interactive projects.

And while their success is obvious, partner and design director Scott Nash refuses to say they are experts. "That suggests you have the answers." They instead prefer to consider themselves "students in kid culture."

Though Big Blue Dot is an entity on its own, it is also part of a larger company, Corey & Co. Design Inc., along with three other studios—Hatmaker, Dancing Pictures and Corey McPherson Nash—each with its own specialty that is not centered on kids: Corey McPherson Nash for traditional graphic design, Hatmaker for broadcast design, and Dancing Pictures for interactive media. Talents from all studios are put to use depending on the project. This setup allows each to maintain the advantages of a small firm but with the resources of a much larger company.

Corey & Company already had a track record in kids design long before the formation of Big Blue Dot, but the business was quickly getting bigger and the partners feared losing the intimacy of a smaller operation. "We had always had a sense that we wanted to keep our studios down to around 16 to 20 people," says Nash. "That's a size where communication seems manageable and the focus of the studio is more manageable." It was at that point that Nash suggested developing a studio whose *raison d'être* was kids.

"At first," says Nash, "we thought it was going to be very limiting, but it's actually opened doors to us in ways that we didn't imagine in our wildest dreams. It's a really narrow cast but the projects we are working on are as diverse as can be. It has expanded our areas of expertise in amazing ways." That expansion has taken Big Blue Dot from consulting on positioning and branding to product development.



Gumball from PBS's The Game (above) and TBS's Disaster Area Garfield promo (right)

About two years ago, Big Blue Dot realized that while its informal monitoring of kid culture—which included sending out everyone in the office with $20 on "kid blitzes" to find some new kid thing to discuss—was useful, a more formal kind of research was necessary. What resulted was the Trend Tracking™ division Big Blue Box that serves as an internal resource, as well as a resource for both clients and non-clients. And while it is a division of Big Blue Dot, it is also quite literally a big blue box.

Every three months, a crash course in kid culture in the form of a cubic foot blue box is shipped out to subscribers (annual subscriptions cost $2,000). Included in the box is a written analysis of the latest trends, as well as related product samples, and audio and visual roundups from various media. "We decided it needed to be very hands-on," says the Box's editor Sue Edelman, "so we decided it should be a box and not a magazine or newspaper. We do on-going, non-traditional research. It's not facts and figures; it's more about what's going on with kids across a broad range of industries and a broad age range of kids." Issues to date

continued on next page

have included analysis on neo-punk and alternative music hitting the mainstream to how parents are working to help their kids get ahead, which is the focus of the latest edition.

The ability to draw upon such a diverse range of resources, as well as talents, gives Big Blue Dot some freedom. According to project director Al Venditto, "we're not bound by a specific medium. We're more attitude-based. Our approach challenges kids. It's smart and unexpected."

The Big Blue Box

TV watershed awareness up

LONDON: An annual survey carried out by the Independent Television Commission reveals that awareness of the U.K.'s television watershed has reached 90 percent among adults for the first time.

Awareness is even higher among parents, with 93 percent now recognizing the 9 p.m. watershed, beyond which program-makers are allowed to assume children are not watching when determining editorial content.

The survey—"Television: The Public's View"—also shows that the majority of people (63 percent) believe responsibility for children's viewing lies mainly with parents, with 29 percent believing it should be shared with broadcasters and just six percent believing broadcasters alone should be responsible.

Nearly one in three parents interviewed said they had actively prevented their children from watching certain channels because they felt they were unsuitable or bad for them. This proportion was higher among parents who were cable and satellite subscribers (36 percent). Mothers were more likely to take action than fathers, and respondents with young children (aged 5 to 9) were the most likely to intervene.

However, despite current hysteria about the introduction of the V-chip into the U.K., parents seem reluctant to take up services that are already available to block channels.

Cable or satellite subscribing parents were asked whether they ever used the existing control devices, with the majority of such services allowing them to block channels they do not wish their children to see. Only 31 percent said they had such a device, and of those, only 12 percent (around three percent of all cable or satellite subscribers) used the system frequently.

As in previous years, the survey found that the main causes of offence are bad language, violence and sex/nudity in that order.

The ITC also discovered that in households with children, 35 percent had sets in the child's bedroom. The ITC is required by law to assess public opinion concerning programming and the effects of these programs on viewers' attitudes, behavior and preferences.

The interview sample consisted of 1,371 adults with working TV sets. **JG**

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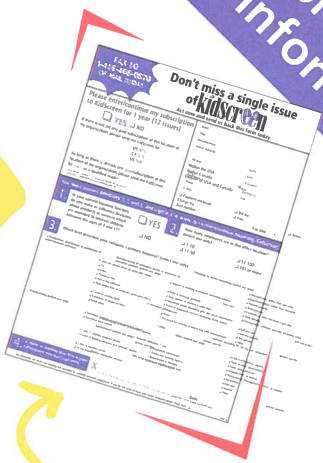

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Site seeing

by Greg Skinner

Greg Skinner (mina@inforamp.net) is a communications consultant for Mina Research and marketing columnist who specializes in the kids market. He also admits to having an unhealthy obsession with the World Wide Web. KidScreen *asked Skinner to do some browsing on our behalf and report on some of the interesting kids sites as seen from the eye of a near-kid himself.*

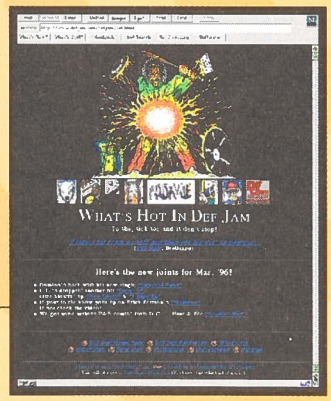
In the nineties, technology rules. Well, yes and no, because no matter how many tricks, gadgets and goodies a site has, a Web site is as much about the feelings it generates as it is the technical aspects that comprise it. So whether it comes from content or construction, the key is whether the user gets that warm fuzzy feeling.

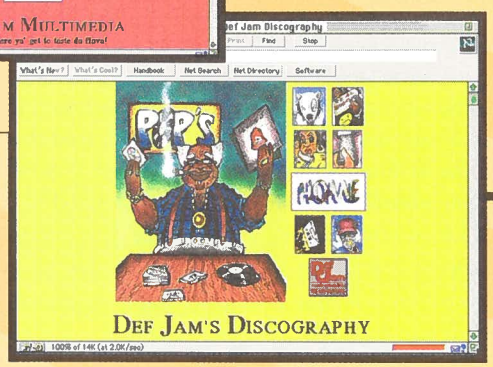
Throwing tons of money at a site doesn't necessarily guarantee a good response, and may in fact act as a repellent. The reason is that the best sites may not be slick, but often come from within specific subcultures and often garner a stronger response than their costlier brethren.

The most recognizable trait of a site not getting it is when it includes everything under the sun. But at some point, critical questions—Is it giving me what I want? Are my needs being fulfilled? Am I feeling satisfied or shafted?—will all have to be answered. It's when you leave a location with a tweaked mind and a peaked imagination that you feel hyped.

The interactive element of Web sites means that in personifying corporate image and identity, they easily outpace existing media, so a site not up to speed with what's going on says a lot. And as more locations get better and better, you'll really have to know what satisfies.

It's really easy for kids to tell right away if a site has the stuff that they want, so whatever you do, you had better make their stay a good one.





Def Jam
www.cranberries.com

When it comes to today's music and kids, the real soul food comes from the streets. So if that's the case, then this site is urban gourmet for sure.

Strolling into Def Jam, you don't really know what to expect, and then *wah@#!*, right in front of you, a dope little graffiti home page with hidden links. Intentional or not, this home page is a good example of breaking the norm. A lot of sites out there make everything too obvious when a challenge is both necessary and nice. A page that keeps you clicking means all exploration, and boredom begone!

Graffiti icons form the nav bar and guide you around the site, giving the whole thing a nice flavor (though changing them each update would definitely keep things crisp) and site content is bolstered by on-point vernacular and verbosity. Excellent target market knowledge here.

The big plusses are a rich color palette—it largely ignores the usual mundane shades of grey—that injects amazing life and (finally) really good speed; nothing ever keeps you waiting too long and everything drops in nice and quick. Cool, especially if you don't have the latest equipment.

Problems? Well, actual mail is conspicuously absent from the Mail section, there are a lot of typos, and there's a real need for some sort of update (cobwebs are a bad way to lose customers). Soliciting questions and not providing the forms is never a hit. Hmmm, there seems to be a detail issue here.

On the other hand, the nav bar setup makes it really easy to get around. The site has the requisite audio and video clips all over the place (as well as an A/V library. Solid.), and excellent content such as what's new, tour highlights and excellent artist profiles that give you the bits you really look for.

Where it disappoints the most is that you expect loads more info and waaaay more breadth. Right now it's all very narcissistic and too much preening can lead to a site that's easy to forget. With so much happening out there, its content could easily gain some weight. Really, all it needs is to cast its net further.

It keeps it all consistent, but never boring, projecting a nice, cool vibe. Everything you want and everything that you need is definitely here, just not enough of it. There are some issues to tweak but they're not huge, which means this site has no trouble getting its groove on.

overall rating: **bangin' (9 out of 10)**

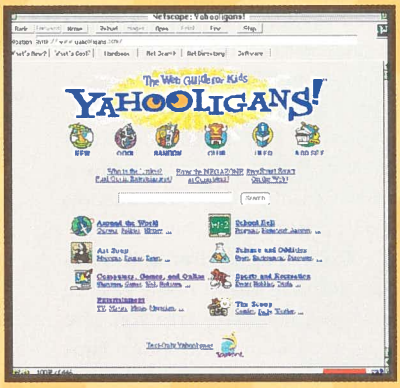
See page 44 for another Web site review

continued from page 43

Yahoo
www.yahooligans.com

Yahooligans! Check it out. Very catchy. But it begs the question, "is this site all in the name?" Nope, because this one is even better than its label. And that's hard to believe.

First off, *everything* drops in super fast with lots of clip art-type pictures to keep everybody interested.



Navigation is excellent, with a menu or category link always available on your journey. And looking for fun? Well there's a ton of stuff to do, all of it revolving around Yahooligan resources (who would have thought?).

There are jazzy little things, like automatically going to Yahooligans every time you start surfing and a Club section where the newest Web sites are e-mailed to you before popular release. Smart.

It's all super tight when Random boots you around the world on various adventures. (We ended up at Sports Illustrated For Kids—see page 39 in *KidScreen*'s February issue—the Internet public library and Dinosaur hall.) The Street Smart section is, in actuality, a set of guidelines for safe surfing (surf protected and stay away from viruses). Holy.

Yes, there are the usual Cool and New sections and, as expected, the content is immaculate and completely eventful.

Contests bolster site resources (for example, tell us your favorite sites, for the common good of course) and the nice little entry forms provided collect all requisite information.

Yeeks! Disney seems to have links everywhere, and why not with a hook like, "don't click here for entertainment"? The result is most surely a trip over to Disney on-line.

All of this and guess what? You haven't even reached the meaty section yet. The Sports and World sections, among others, have excellent categorization and detail. Everything is right at your fingertips. The Homework Answers section especially gets a gold star. The best part is that if you can't find it, Yahooligans finds it for you.

Overall, site construction is immaculate. One, maybe two, crisp cruises through and most kids will have the hang of it. The site has positioned itself as the search tool of choice, and it pretty much is.

If you really wanted to get nitpicky, Advertising Opportunities is embedded with kids topics when it would probably operate more efficiently elsewhere and the instructions for adding a URL (Web site link) seem somewhat adult-ish. But that's about it!

Every single page, it seems, is pure simplicity and lacks any clutter. There are a lot of forms to report things (such as problems, bad links), and the site makes you feel that all information is at your fingertips. Solid.

Yahooligans describes itself as a browsable index for 8- to 14-year-olds (yahoounderstatement), but as an offshoot of its big brother, it's hardly all kiddy stuff. This site is as refined, if not more, than its renowned sibling and a lot of others could really learn a thing or two from it. Never out of style, Yahooinvaluable.

overall rating: **didyouseethat!? (9.5 out of 10)**

Kutoka does CD-ROMs

by Andrea Haman

Kutoka Interactive of Montreal is eagerly anticipating the release of its first CD-ROMs. The year-old developer is producing *Cyber Grannies* for Wonder Tools of San Francisco and *The Cassandra Galleries* for Corel Corporation of Ottawa.

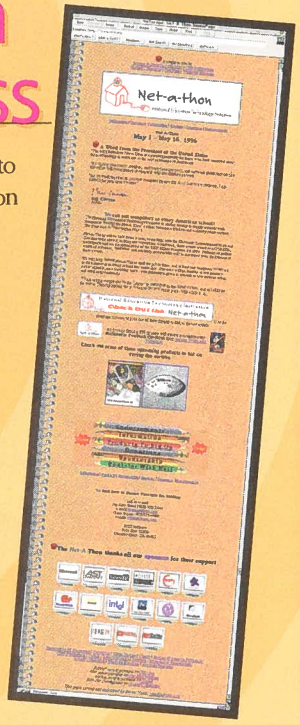
For children 3 to 7, *Cyber Grannies* features a 3-D world for each letter of the alphabet. Each world in this vocabulary-learning title includes hidden objects and an activity, starting with the letter of the world, and is hosted by a granny whose profession also begins with the appropriate letter.

In *The Cassandra Galleries*, players 12 and older solve puzzles or simply follow the story to locate the missing wealthy recluse William Cassandra and his daughter, Maya.

Both are edutainment titles, and Kutoka wants to make this area its niche, says Richard Vincent, creative director.

Cyber Grannies will launch for Windows 3.1 and Windows 95 in late summer, while *The Cassandra Galleries* will hit shelves in the fall for Windows and Macintosh.

Net-A-Thon goes to class



Taking a relatively unique approach to raising funds, the National Education Technology Initiative is holding its first Net-A-Thon from May 1 to 16.

The non-profit organization's goal is to equip every classroom in the 130,000 public schools in the U.S.—for students from kindergarten to Grade 12—with the computers and software needed to hook up to the Internet by the year 2000.

More than 80 companies have donated the "thousands" of goods and services up for bid, says NET Initiative director Jay Alan Samit, president of Van Nuys, California-based Jasmine Multimedia Publishing.

An NFL Pro Bowl football signed by the league's top players, an opportunity to be an extra on *Law & Order*, and for kids, autographed sketches from the *Berenstain Bears* books are among the items posted on the Net-A-Thon Web site (http://www.neti.org).

U.S. Vice President Al Gore will deliver a speech via satellite to Electronic Entertainment Expo (see page 23) on May 16. The highest bidder per item will then be notified by e-mail.

NET Initiative plans to make the on-line auction a twice-yearly event coinciding with E3 in May and Comdex in November. Five hundred schools will receive their supplies this summer. AH

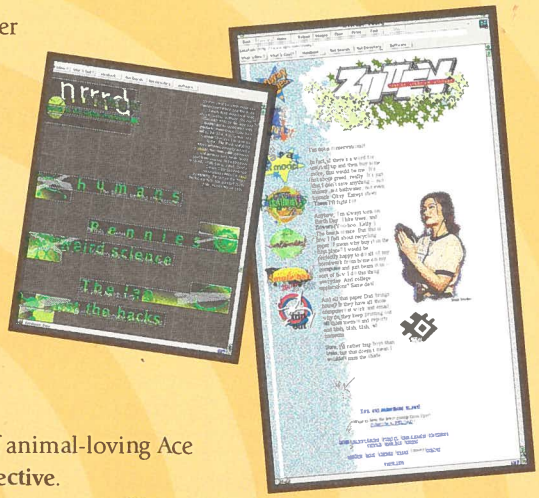
Turner *RELOAD*s Spiv site

After launching the Spiv Web site earlier this year to communicate with 15- to 24-year-olds, Turner Broadcasting System thinks it has found a way to keep in closer touch with this demographic.

The Atlanta-based company kicked off Spiv (http://www.spiv.com) in January to acquaint itself with "an audience that Turner doesn't reach right now," says Scott Arenson, marketing manager for Turner Broadcasting System.

Now, Turner is publishing *RELOAD*, a weekly e-mail newsletter that highlights what's new to Spiv's movie, sports, indie music, fashion and other areas.

"On the Internet, there's so many sites out there that you need to build a relationship with your audience in order to keep them coming back," says Arenson, who also edits *RELOAD*. The first issue went out in early April, and Turner is pleased with the five to 10 new subscribers a day who are signing on. AH



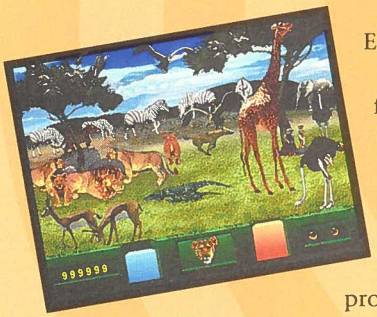
A CD-ROM roundup

• 7th Level, located in Richardson, Texas, will be bringing the wacky adventures of animal-loving Ace Ventura to the interactive world in August with the release of **Ace Ventura Pet Detective**.

Ace Ventura needs the help of players eight to 14 to crack a case involving missing animals. The voice of the pet detective is provided by the actor from the Saturday morning series on CBS.

The title will be available for Windows 3.1, Windows 95, and Macintosh in the U.S., Canada, Europe and the Asia-Pacific region.

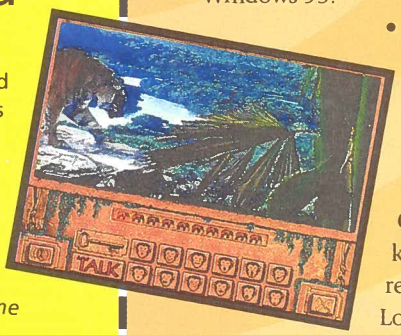
7th Level plans to develop and publish another title, likely to be an animal education product, featuring the movie and TV property. Los Angeles-based Morgan Creek Interactive is the licensor.



• Discovery Channel Multimedia of Bethesda, Maryland, invites players 12-plus to step into the skin of a lion in **Savage** and struggle to survive on the Serengeti. The game features 10 levels representing different stages of the lion's life, and the lion encounters 20 enemies and prey on the 3-D, real-time terrain.

It's the first animal simulation title by Discovery Channel Multimedia, as well as its first product set in a 3-D world and in real time. Viridis of Los Angeles is the game's developer.

Savage hit shelves in late April in the U.S. and Canada, and is available for Windows 3.1 and Windows 95.



• Atlanta-based IBM Multimedia Studio is taking kids five to nine on a trek through the wilderness in **The Jungle Book**, launched early last month. Players accompany Colonel Ilgwom and his monkey, La-tee, in their quest to recover the stolen crown of King Louie, the orangutan ruler of Monkey City.

The title, developed by Powerhouse Entertainment of Dallas, Texas, incorporates footage from the 1994 live action movie *The Jungle Book*.

The game is available for Windows 3.1 and Windows 95 in the U.S. and Canada, and will enter Europe in the fall. AH

New CD-ROMs for Bayard

by Pascale Paoli

France's leading publisher for preschoolers and children, Bayard Presse Jeune, has just celebrated 30 years. The company publishes 15 magazines in France, including such titles as *Pomme d'Api*, *Popi*, *Astrapi* and *Okapi*, capturing some 4.5 million readers. Bayard Presse Jeune also publishes 26 titles that are written in 10 languages and available in 29 countries.

Many of the characters the group created, like Petit Ours Brun and Mimi Cracra have become the heroes of animation TV series. Two new preschool series, *Les Belles histoires de Pomme d'Api* and *Léo & Popi*, will air on France 3 next September.

To celebrate its birthday, Bayard Presse Jeune has developed a few multimedia titles for 1996. Last month, the first Pomme d'Api educational CD-ROM was released, entitled *Ça se transforme*. In June, two CD-ROMs will come out, *A Prince in School* and *The Time Machine*.

And, next October, the group will test the Bayard Online Service, dedicated to children and young adults aged 10 to 25.

How to reach some of the key people and companies in this issue

advertising & promotion

Duck Soup Produckions, Los Angeles, California, Mark Medernach, 310-478-0771

Griffin Bacal, New York, New York, 212-337-6300

Hasbro Inc., Pawtucket, Rhode Island, 212-431-8697

KidSafety of America, Chino, California, 909-902-1340

Lyrick Studios, Richardson, Texas, Ann Piper, 214-390-6152

Mattel Inc., El Segundo, California, 310-252-2000

McDonald's Corporation, Oak Brook, Illinois, 708-575-3000

licensing & merchandising

Chatsworth Enterprises, London, Eng., 0171-734-4302

Copyright Promotions Licensing Group, London, Eng., Jane Garner, 0171-580-7431

Marvel Characters, Los Angeles, California, Kathie Harb, 310-581-6228

Nelvana Marketing, Los Angeles, California, 213-549-4222

Paws, Inc., Albany, Indiana, 317-287-2222

Warner Bros. Consumer Products, Burbank, California, 818-954-3821

production, distribution & programming

Cabin Fever Entertainment, Greenwich, Connecticut, Susan Warner, 203-622-3449

Cardiff Animation Festival Office, Cardiff, Wales, 0171-494-0506

CBS Television, New York, New York, 212-975-4321

Channel 4, London, Eng., 0171-396-4444

GMTV, London, Eng., 0171-827-7000

MCA Television Group, Universal City, California, Libby Gill, (818) 777-6425

Nickelodeon UK, London, Eng., 0171-462-1000

Nickelodeon, New York, New York, 212-258-7500

TCC, London, Eng., 0171-240-3422

Walt Disney Television, Burbank, California, Laurel Whitcomb, 818-560-2740

special report

Big Top Productions, San Francisco, California, (415) 978-5363

Forest Interactive, Sydney, Australia, 61-2-519-1366

Interactive Digital Software Association, Washington, D.C., 202-833-4372

Jasmine Multimedia, Los Angeles, California, 818-780-3344

Saban Interactive, Los Angeles, California, Suzie Parkinson, 310-235-5432

Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment, Burbank, California, 818-954-6000

trends & research

Big Blue Dot, Watertown, Massachusetts, 617-923-2583

ITC Information Office, 33 Foley St., London, Eng., W1P 7LB, 44-171-255-3000

Offices to inspire kid-friendly design at Big Blue Dot

new media

Discovery Channel Multimedia, Bethesda, Maryland, 301-986-0444

IBM Multimedia Studio, Atlanta, Georgia, 770- 644-4881

Kutoka Interactive, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, 514-525-2222

National Education Technology Initiative, Sherman Oaks, California, 818-780-3344

Powerhouse Entertainment, Dallas, Texas, 214-233-5400

7th Level, Richardson, Texas, 214-437-4858

Turner Broadcasting System, Atlanta, Georgia, 404-827-1700

CBS is bringing out a new new series from the creators of *Earthworm Jim* (see page 16)

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Event	Date	Location	Phone	Industry
Comdex	June 3-6	Chicago, IL	617-449-6600	Toys/Games/Electronics
Toronto Worldwide Short Film Festival	June 4-9	Toronto, Canada	416-535-8506	Film
Prix Jeunesse International	June 7-13	Munich, Germany	49-89-59002058	Kids TV
Banff Television Festival	June 9-15	Banff, Canada	403-678-9260	TV Programming
American Booksellers Assoc. Convention	June 15-17	Chicago, IL	1-800-840-5614	Publishing
Latin American TV Market (MIDIA '96)	June 18-20	Madrid, Spain	34-1-345-8493	TV Programming
PROMAX International	June 19-22	Los Angeles, CA	213-465-3777	TV/Promotion/Multimedia
Licensing Show '96	June 25-27	New York, NY	203-256-4700	Toys
Kids' Entertainment Seminar	June 28-29	New York, NY	212-462-9344	Conference
National Gifts & Decorative Accessories Market	June 29-July 3	Dallas, TX	214-749-5435	Gift/Novelties
Comic-Con International	July 4-7	San Diego, CA	619-544-9555	Comic books/Characters
VSDA (Video Software Dealers Assoc.) Convention	July 10-13	Los Angeles, CA	818-385-1500	Video
New York International Gift Fair	Aug. 11-15	New York, NY	1-800-272-7469	Gift/Novelties
Hiroshima International Animation Festival	Aug. 22-26	Hiroshima, Japan	81-82-245-0245	Animation
Magic International	Aug. 26-29	Las Vegas, NV	310-393-7757	Apparel
European Licensing Fair	Sept. 8-10	Birmingham, UK	44 181 855 9201	Licensing & Merchandising
Dallas Toy Show	Sept. 9-10	Dallas, TX	214-749-5435	Toys/Games/Electronics
Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3)	Sept. 19-21	Tokyo, Japan	508-628-4891 (U.S.)	Toys/Games/Electronics
Ottawa International Animation Festival	Oct. 2-6	Ottawa, Canada	613-232-6727	Animation
MIPCOM Junior	Oct. 5-6	Cannes, France	33-1-44-34-44-44	Production/Distribution
MIPCOM	Oct. 7-11	Cannes, France	33-1-44-34-44-44	Production/Distribution
The Motivational Show	Oct. 15-17	Chicago, IL	708-850-7779	Licensing/Merch/P & I
Worldwide Licensing Exposition	Oct. 23-25	Hong Kong	212-575-4510	Licensing & Merchandising
JPMA (Juvenile Products Manufacturers Assoc.)	Oct. 27-31	Dallas, TX	609-231-8500	Miscellaneous
EPM Entertainment Marketing Conference	Nov. 10-12	Los Angeles, CA	212-941-0099	Entertainment/Licensing
London Program Market	Nov. 18-20	London, UK	44-181-948-5522	Production/Distribution
Comdex	Nov. 18-22	Las Vegas, NV	617-449-6600	Toys/Games/Electronics
MIP-Asia, MIP-Asia Licensing	Dec. 5-7	Hong Kong	33-1-44-34-44-44	Distribution/Licensing
5th Los Angeles Inter. Animation Celebration	January 1997	Los Angeles, CA	818-991-2884	Animation
NATPE	Jan. 13-16	New Orleans, LA	310-453-4440	TV Programming
Nuremburg International Toy Fair	Jan. 30-Feb. 5	Nuremburg, Germany	49-911-998130	Toys/Games
Brussels Festival of Cartoons & Animation	Feb. 5-16	Brussels, Belgium	32-2-534-4125	Animation
MILIA	Feb. 10-12	Cannes, France	33-1-44-34-44-44	Interactive/Multimedia
Monte Carlo Television Festival	Feb. 10-13	Monte Carlo, Monaco	201-869-4022 (U.S.)	Distribution/Production
American International Toy Fair	Feb. 10-17	New York, NY	212-675-1141	Toys
Supershow	Feb. 14-17	Atlanta, GA	1-800-327-3736	Sports
Pacific Northwest Toy Assoc. Toy & Hobby Fair	Mar. 15-17	Seattle, WA	206-242-4462	Toys/Games
Dallas Gift & Toy Show	Mar. 15-18	Dallas, TX	214-749-5435	Toys/Games
Bologna Children's Book Fair	Apr. 10-13	Bologna, Italy	39-51-282-361	Publishing
MIP-TV	April 11-16	Cannes, France	33-1-44-34-44-44	Production/Distribution
NATPE Animation and Special Effects Expo	May 8-11	Los Angeles, CA	310-453-4440, ext. 210	Animation Expo

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